HERALD OF CHRIST
LOUIS BOURDALOUE, S. J.

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KING OF PREACHERS AND PREACHER OF KINGS

A Portrait

BY

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FOREWORD

To the majority of readers in English-speaking countries, Louis Bourdaloue is little more than a name. Students of French literature come into remote contact with the French Jesuit in their study of the Age of Louis XIV; his religious brethren still recall his eminent virtues; priests occasionally borrow a division or plan from his discourses, and scholars publish a few passages translated from his sermons. But no reliable biography or extended criticism of the orator or of his methods, exists in our language. "*Stat magni nominis umbra.*" He is but the shadow of a great name.

The writer of the following sketch has long thought that Louis Bourdaloue deserved better at our hands. From Americans especially, this Jesuit of the seventeenth century should win sincere appreciation. For, in spite of the marked difference between the Court of Versailles and the democracy of the United States, he has a message for us. He invariably speaks with that simplicity, clearness, naturalness, vigor and manly directness which Americans admire. Moreover, if there be anything that appeals to them, it is that earnestness and whole-hearted absorption with which a

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man carries out his allotted task. Louis Bourdaloue put his heart and soul into his work. He was commissioned to deliver a momentous message. For thirty-four years he preached Christ before kings and princes with a dignity and power seldom surpassed in the annals of sacred eloquence.

In the following brief pages, the author has endeavored to draw a picture of this "King of Preachers and Preacher of Kings." Strictly speaking, a formal life of Bourdaloue can scarcely be written. For the series of rather colorless events that marked his career, is not of that dramatic character which history and biography deign to chronicle at much length. But it has been possible to describe the more striking features of the man, the priest, the sacred orator, to analyze his work, and to trace, in outline at least, those historic scenes, across which flit the figures of Louis XIV and of the men and women of those distant times. These pages, then, aim at the dignity neither of history nor biography. They endeavor only to present the reader with the portrait of one whose message to his contemporaries carried light and power wherever it fell from his eloquent lips. That message is as needed now as it was in the Age of Louis XIV.

JOHN C. REVILLE, S.J.

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HERALD OF CHRIST

Chapter I

THE HERALD REACHES PARIS

A MISTY dawn was breaking over Paris in the late autumn of 1648. Just as the bells of Notre Dame were summoning the burghers to Mass, a travel-stained coach rumbled under the arches of one of the city gates and was creeping lumberingly through the network of ill-paved and tortuous streets. The street lamps of that model Chief of Police, Messire Gabriel-Nicholas de la Reynie, were as yet unknown in the capital of the boy-king, Louis XIV, and owing both to the still lingering darkness and the cobblestones, its progress was slow. A couple of servants, on stocky Berrichon horses, rode close to the vehicle, rapiers dangling at their sides and the butt-ends of authoritative-looking pistols gleaming from their holsters.

The coach, whose door-panels were marked with armorial bearings, carried two passengers. A single glance at them told that they were father and son. The elder, whose dress, like that of the youth be-

side him, proclaimed him a member of the better class, a lawyer or a King's justice, bore on his finely chiseled features a stamp of gravity, dignity and strength. Once or twice he thrust his head out of the window and spoke a few words of direction to his men. Evidently he had been in Paris before. The voice had the ring of a man accustomed to command, but was mellow and kindly. The lad beside him was clear of eye, with well-knit, but rather delicate frame. He might be from sixteen to eighteen years of age. Like that of his elder, his face beamed with sincerity, intelligence, decision and strength. Father and son spoke little. Nor had they held long converse together during the last few days since they had left Bourges, 120 miles to the south, and bidden farewell to the Gothic towers of St. Etienne which stood guard over the city whose loyalty to Charles VII kept a corner of France for that monarch until the Maid of Orléans restored him to his throne. Now and then the boy glanced at his companion only to see the tears glistening in his eyes. Tenderly then he clasped his father's hand. But neither, at that moment, spoke a word.

By this time Paris was all astir. Ever in its long history the City by the Seine has played the siren, easily winning the heart of its citizens and visitors. Now under the lifting curtain of the mists, it

seemed to put forth all its witchery. Before the travelers, the Seine spread the ribbon of its stream, shimmering by dock and bridge, binding in its folds, orchard and garden and river bank, ivied tower or cloister. Life foamed and bubbled to the brim in that Paris of the Fronde and the opera-bouffe war, that might have been a tragedy, between M. le Cardinal Mazarin and M. de Retz, and the Queen Regent, Anne of Austria, and Condé and the Duchesses de Longueville and de Chevreuse. It was a mimic war between the court party and the Parliament. At times the contestants did not exactly know on what side they stood nor wherefore they were fighting. But, for all that, Paris did not lose its proverbial gaiety. So as the coach passed the narrow, crooked streets, had their minds not been intent upon other topics, our travelers would have been amazed at the life, the movement, the laughter which everywhere greeted them on their way.

At last the coach reached the Faubourg St. Germain. After passing many a sumptuous mansion, or *hôtel,* as the homes of the great were called in those days, it lurched into a narrow street, with the plebeian name of Pot-de-Fer St. Sulpice, semi-cloistered, as it were, from the surrounding splendors, and stopped before a solid but rather solemn and sombre edifice. It was the Novitiate of the

Jesuit Fathers. One of the servants announced at the porter's lodge that Messire Etienne Bourdaloue, Bailli of Vierzon and a King's Councilor at the bar of Bourges, together with his son Louis Bourdaloue, would have speech and interview with the superior of the house.

The two travelers had not long to wait. They had barely time to notice the spacious room into which they had been ushered, with its high paneled ceiling, the uncarpeted but immaculately polished floor, the Spartan simplicity of the bare walls, upon which hung a beautifully carved Spanish crucifix, a painting of St. Ignatius, copied from Coelho, and another representing Anne of Austria, with a rather mischievous-looking and decidedly chubby child, the boy-king Louis XIV, standing at her knee, when a dark-robed figure entered. They had been expected, the object of their visit was known, and they were affectionately welcomed. After a few minutes, during which the usual courtesies were exchanged, not without signs of deep emotion, yet of both joy and pride on the part of father and son, Etienne Bourdaloue rose and gently taking the hand of Louis led him to the kindly old priest. Louis understood, and bent his knees. The priest raised his hands and blessed the boy. Etienne Bourdaloue had given his son to the Society of Jesus.

It was the lad's own choice. Louis Bourdaloue had thus been accepted as a novice in that Order which he was to illustrate by his eloquence and his virtues. It was November 10, 1648. A few days after, the Bailli of Vierzon rode back to Bourges, alone. But as he pressed Brother Louis to his heart while bidding him farewell, the venerable magistrate was filled with joy. The light that shone in the eyes of the young novice, the quiet strength that radiated from his whole being, told him that Louis in giving himself to the service of God, had made no blunder. For father and son, the parting was painful. But in the peace both now experienced, the sacrifice had already received its reward.

Chapter II

THE MASKED FOE

THE life of Louis Bourdaloue, the young novice we left a moment ago at the Jesuit house in Paris, the doctrine and the morality which later on he preached, the rugged honesty of his character, his unworldliness in the midst of a licentious court, are an eloquent refutation of the calumnies and slanders directed against the Order of which he became one of the purest glories. Louis Bourdaloue was the living antithesis of the selfish and scheming policy attributed to the Society of Jesus. Its founder, St. Ignatius, had prayed, so it is said, that his little army might never lack the stimulus which trial and persecution always give to any body of men. Even from a worldly point of view, that was a wise prayer, for it is good for the soldier to know that he has an ever-watchful and relentless enemy in front; he will keep his powder dry. That prayer must have been a fervent one, and it seems to have been heard, for the Society of Jesus has seldom been without her enemies. Governments have persecuted her members and statesmen have

plotted her downfall. While historians misrepresented her motives and falsified her annals, novelists and reviewers fanned against her the flames of popular hatred and mistrust. To thousands the very name her children bear, stands for low cunning, hypocrisy, double-dealing and deceit. To slander her is to spring into prominence and fame. Some of her enemies owed to the attacks they made upon her the little popularity they once enjoyed. The blow delivered, they sank back into the obscurity from which, for a moment, they had emerged.

Amongst the opponents of the Order, men like Chemnitz, "*Theologiae Jesuitarum Praecipua Capita,*" Leipzig; Hospinian, "*Historia Jesuitica,*" Tiguri, 1619; Gioberti, "*I Prolegomeni,*" 1845; "*Il Gesuita Moderno,*" 1846; La Chalotais, "*Comptes Rendus des Constitutions des Jésuites,*" Paris, 1712; Pasquier; Arnauld, "*Théologie morale des Jésuites*"; "*Morale Pratique des Jésuites*"; Schopp, "*Stratagemata Jesuitarum,*" Geneva, 1634; Michelet, "*Jésuites,*" Paris, 1843; the author of the "*Monita Secreta,*" etc., one giant at least was found. In him the soldier sons of Loyola, the Jesuit masters who formed Louis Bourdaloue and with whom he lived, met a foe who carried into the contest an intellect and a genius of the highest stamp. Had his charges been founded and had he

fought under the white standard of truth, the Company of Jesus must have gone down under his titanic blows. That genius was Blaise Pascal.

Like the knight in the story, Blaise Pascal fought against the Company of Jesus, against its moralists and canonists, whose teaching " the Preacher of Kings and the King of Preachers " was to re-echo, unknown and visor down. The weapons he used were keen-edged and deadly. The blows he struck were not always fair, and the impartial judges of the fray must decide that the dashing swordsman too often violated the rules of knightly encounter.

The " *Provinciales* " of Pascal are one of the masterpieces of French literature. It is true that Voltaire himself admitted that the Jesuits were not to be judged by the portrait drawn there and that Chateaubriand called the pamphlet an " immortal lie." In spite of all that, the book marks an epoch in the development of French letters. The " *Provinciales* " created a new language, the crisp and sparkling language of polemics and controversy. They successfully employed all the resources of sarcasm and irony. Pauline de Grignan, Madame de Sévigné's daughter, found them tedious. She is not the only one to nod over them. Still they are witty in their way, and have some of that *vis comica* of which Molière was soon to be a master.

They were the sensation of the hour. Many who have neither love nor sympathy for the Jesuits, admit today that the Letters did incalculable harm to the cause of religion. Voltaire, Sainte-Beuve, Havet, all three little suspected of leanings either towards the Jesuits or Catholicism, admit that the "*Provinciales*" were built on an insecure foundation, that they injured, not only the Society of Jesus but religion itself. According to the Patriarch of Ferney, the "*Lettres*" rested on an absolutely false assumption. The extravagant opinions, he says, of a few Spanish and Flemish Jesuits were attributed to the whole Society. Similar views, he adds, might have been dug up from the tomes of Dominican and Franciscan casuists. The "*Provinciales*," he continues, attempted to prove that the Jesuits had a clearly formulated plan to corrupt mankind, "a plan which no sect, no society has ever had or can possibly entertain" ("*Siècle de Louis XIV*," c. XXXVII). Sainte-Beuve sees in Pascal a precursor of that Paul-Louis Courier, the prince of French pamphleteers, and declares that Pascal had by the "*Provinciales*" paved the way for the latter's attack on the Sacrament of Penance. Pascal would not have relished the comparison. (Sainte-Beuve, "*Port-Royal*," Vol, III, p. 390.) Havet re-echoes the words of Sainte-Beuve. According to him, the genius of Pascal began that

work of ruin and destruction, which later on was continued by the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The destructive influence of his ideas survives him and far exceeds those ideas themselves. In the "*Provinciales*" Havet sees the source of inspiration of the modern press and pamphlet in their moods of opposition and revolt (Fuzet, "*Les Jansénistes du XVII Siècle,*" p. 321).

Without denying the literary merit of the "*Lettres,*" Joseph de Maistre holds that the success they obtained was due in great part to the fact that they were directed against the Jesuits, the Janissaries or body-guard, as he calls them, of the Catholic Church. They had to be humiliated. If directed against any other religious body, he adds, they would have failed. Whatever may be the truth of the last statement, it is certain that through the Jesuits a treacherous blow was aimed at religion itself, unconsciously perhaps. To a great extent that made the success of the pamphlet. (De Maistre, "*De l'Eglise Gallicane,*" Bk. I, c. 9.) In those caustic pages, Pascal parodied the doctrine of the Jesuits, ridiculed their theologians, rearranged and schematized the text of their professors, canonists and doctors. Undoubtedly no such blow had ever been aimed at the Company. In lending his hand to this attack, Pascal was degrading his glorious gifts, selling and marting his offices

to undeservers. The Jansenistic party was triumphant, for during the years 1656–1657, there was no man in the Order in France who could step into the lists and successfully face the blade and the blows of the young champion.

The Society of Jesus in France could no doubt then boast of talented sons. The "*Provinciales*" were answered. Fathers Annat, Nouet and Pirot, and later on Father Daniel, in "*Entretiens de Cléandre et d'Eudoxe sur les Lettres Provinciales*," tried the task. Petit-Didier answered the "*Entretiens*." Daniel replied in 1699 by his "*Lettre de l'Abbé — à Eudoxe touchant la nouvelle apologie des Lettres Provinciales*." (Brisacier. "*Le Jansénisme Confondu*.") But solid and learned as their refutation was, it could not and did not meet the popular ear. It lacked the very qualities which had made the "*Provinciales*" such a success. It lacked the rapid cross-fire of argument and laughter, the irony and sarcasm, the wit, the crackling epigram, the dash, the point, the sting, the invective, the buffooneries, the broad caricature, the telling personalities of their opponent, — it lacked the travesty of truth, the spirit of rancor and hatred which sully his pages. That Jesuits like Escobar and Bauny erred now and then on the side of leniency we might readily admit. But few can sincerely believe that

either they or their Order conspired to upset the laws of Christian morality. Convincing specimens of Pascal's unfairness may be seen in "Pascal's Invincible Blade," *The Month,* August, 1904; Weiss, "*P. Antonio de Escobar y Mendoza als Moraltheologe, in Pascal's Beleuchtung und im Lichte der Wahrheit* (Freiburg, 1911); Belloc, "An Analysis of the Lettres Provinciales" (*Studies,* Sept., 1920).

In the nature of things the Jesuits could not fight Pascal with pamphlets and books. They could not use the poisoned weapons which he wielded with such deadly precision. Their best defense was found not in books, argument or controversy, but in a man. Eight years after the death of the misguided genius who had attacked them, Louis Bourdaloue appeared prominently on the scene. His preaching was a constant and eloquent refutation of the "Letters," a refutation gaining strength day by day, during the thirty-four years it was heard.

Pascal had accused the Jesuits of teaching a lax, accommodating and worldly morality. In the pulpits of Paris and in the palaces of Louis XIV, to the citizens and people of what was still a thoroughly Catholic city, to the lords and ladies of a brilliant and pleasure-loving court, to the Huguenots of the Cévennes, for thirty-four years, with unflinching

courage, without abating a jot or tittle of their unwelcome teaching, Bourdaloue preached the commandments, the lessons, the duties of Faith, with a voice as authoritative after those long years, as it had been fresh and virile when, a comparatively young man, he ascended the Paris pulpit in 1669, for the first time.

The success of Father Bourdaloue was unparalleled in the history of sacred oratory in France. For thirty-four years Bourdaloue was the first preacher in the kingdom. If not as an orator, as a sermon-maker at least, if we can use the expression, he was without a peer. Bossuet, it is true, just named tutor to the Dauphin, had practically withdrawn from the pulpit and was only seen there at rare intervals, on those solemn occasions, for instance, when he pronounced the funeral orations of Condé or of the Queen of England. Yet to have preached twelve series of sermons before Louis XIV and never to have wearied him; to have riveted the attention of men like Boileau, Colbert, Condé, Louvois, Racine and Lamoignon, of such women as Madame de Maintenon and Madame de Sévigné; to have won the admiration of a fastidious aristocracy and a fickle people, and for thirty-four years to have kept it; to have leaped at the first bound into fame, to have maintained the same high level throughout, never, appreciably at least, to have

fallen below that standard, this is rare and startling and almost without its fellow in the annals of sacred eloquence. There must have been power in the man to rule so long. Bourdaloue did this, and when early in May, 1704, a few days before his death, he preached in the capital for the reception of a Carmelite nun, he was as much himself with all his gifts still unimpaired as when his manly eloquence first told the Parisians that a master had risen in Israel. What preacher in the United States, in the world today, can equal the long and honorable record of this herald of Christ? *"Cui quando ullum invenient parem?"*

Chapter III

THE TRAINING OF THE HERALD

WHEN Bourdaloue came from the provinces to preach in Paris, he was comparatively unknown. He was thirty-seven years of age. Born in Bourges, almost in the heart of France, on the 20th of August, 1632, he was descended from one of those old families of attorneys, lawyers, judges and magistrates who were once the pride of Catholic France, and who cherished above all things "that chastity of honor which felt a stain like a wound." Claude Bourdaloue, Sieur du Bouchet et de Saint-Martin des Laps, great-grandfather of the orator, had been elected alderman, *échevin,* of Bourges in 1613. By letters-royal issued in 1474, Louis XI, in gratitude to the city of Bourges for its unwavering loyalty to his father, Charles VII, had granted patents of nobility to its mayors and aldermen for all time. The title, privileges and armorial bearings were to be hereditary. Etienne Bourdaloue, the father of the future Jesuit, held an honorable position on the bench and at the bar, and was himself a persuasive and eloquent speaker. The

mother of the orator was a woman of keen intellect and solid piety. She lived to the ripe old age of eighty-nine, and was frequently privileged to witness the triumphs of her son and to hear the boy she had taught to lisp his prayers at her knee, boldly preach the Gospel to princes and kings. From her the preacher received one of the finest compliments ever paid him: she could always follow and perfectly understand him. Anne Bourdaloue, a sister of the future Jesuit, married a Chamillart-Villatte. Through the marriages contracted by his sister's children, Bourdaloue became connected with the Mortemarts, the la Feuillades, the Dreux, some of the noblest blood in France.

The boy made his studies at the Jesuit College of his native town. In that same college, Condé, one of the greatest captains of the age, had been educated. Here he had planned and written a treatise on rhetoric at the age of twelve, dedicating it to his brother, the future Prince de Conti, then at the very appreciative age of four. Two years after, 1634, Condé had publicly defended against all comers his theses in philosophy with something of the dash and fire which later on he brought to bear against the squadrons of Spain. About the time young Bourdaloue was brilliantly finishing his studies, Bourges was ringing with the praises of another of its sons, a Jesuit also, the erudite Philip

Labbe. This great man, whose work in collecting and codifying the councils is so well known, had entered the Society quite young and was then publishing the history of his native city and province, "*Histoire du Berry dans l'Eloge panégyrique de la ville de Bourges,*" Paris 1647. The work won him the gratitude and admiration of his townsmen.

In the Collège de Sainte-Marie, of Bourges, Bourdaloue spent seven years. Entering in 1640, and quickly covering the lower grades he made two years of rhetoric, and finished his collegiate studies with two years of philosophy, in 1646 and 1647. In that last year, 1647, just about the time Bourdaloue was rounding out his classical course, Condé, whose name is so closely linked with that of his Jesuit friend, had laid siege to the little town of Lerida. With his usual dash he had ordered the outlying trenches to be rushed and placed four and twenty fiddlers at the head of his charging regiments. But gallant Don Gregorio de Britto, the Spanish governor, drowned the Lydian airs of the French fiddlers with the more martial music of his muskets and guns, and drove the French regiments back to their lines. The next day, with all the courtesy of the hidalgo, Don Gregorio sent by messenger, a present of ices and fruit to the Prince de Condé, begging his Highness to excuse him for not returning the compliment of the fiddlers'

serenade with which the French had greeted him, as he had no violins. Don Gregorio added, however, that if the Spanish music with which he had received the Prince was not too distasteful, he would continue it as long as the French did him the honor of remaining before the walls of Lerida. Don Gregorio was as good as his word. So distasteful became the Spanish music to Condé's ears that he raised the siege and carried his fiddlers to other fields. It must be acknowledged that it was one of the few checks he met with in his long military career. (Boulenger, " The Seventeenth Century," p. 147 ff.)

Like Labbe, Bourdaloue was only sixteen when he entered the Society. He had to make two attempts before he succeeded. He had run away from home the first time, and much to his sorrow had to return to Bourges with his father, when the stern magistrate, who knew of no inverted Fourth Commandment bearing the words: " Thou shalt obey the whims and fancies of thy sons and daughters," knocked at the door of the Jesuit novitiate in Paris, over by St. Sulpice, to capture the runaway and bundle him home. But it was no boyish whim or fancy which had allured Louis away from his father's house. After a few months good Etienne Bourdaloue found out that God wanted his child, and better still, that the boy

longed to give himself to God. It was a sacrifice; the old magistrate made it generously. We have seen how he had in person brought Louis back to the Paris novitiate. When they parted, the brave old man said that he regretted but one thing, that he could not remain with his son and put on the Jesuit's robe, as he had once thought of doing in the past. He had a good substitute. There was still sound mettle and fibre in the fathers and sons of France in those days. That was, as already stated, in the last months of 1648, the year of the Fronde or Sling War, in which a few heads were cracked, but more ink was spilt than blood, the year when Condé in revenge for Lerida, was beating the Spaniards at Lens, the year of the Treaty of Westphalia, which put an end to the Thirty Years' War. Louis Bourdaloue entered the Jesuit Novitiate, of the Faubourg St. Germain, in the Parish of St. Sulpice, November 10, of that momentous year. The Treaty of Westphalia had been signed on the twenty-fourth of the preceding month.

Bourdaloue never wavered in his allegiance to the standard of St. Ignatius. He was ever a loving son of that second mother, the Society of Jesus, to whom he had consecrated his life and to whose rule he had submitted an impulsive and generous character. Reticent as he is about himself in all his works, he nevertheless gives us a

glimpse, at times, of the deep love he had for his vocation, of the joy and gratitude he felt for its salutary restraints and ennobling yoke. "Adorable crib of my Saviour," he exclaims in one of his sermons on the Nativity, " thou dost today make me taste and relish the sweetness of that poverty I have chosen as my lot. Thou revealest its hidden treasures, thou renderest it precious in my eyes and worthy of my homage and love. Thou dost make me prefer it to all the wealth and splendor of the world " (" Sermon on the Nativity," Part II, Vol. I, p. 82). And again: " Although I cannot for a certainty know whether I be in the state of grace and worthy of love, allow me nevertheless, O my Lord, to make this public confession here. I know not whether Thou be pleased with me, and I recognize even that Thou hast many reasons not to be, but as for me, O my God, I must acknowledge and confess to Thy glory that I am pleased and satisfied with Thee and that perfectly." (" Sermon for Low Sunday," Vol. I, p. 625.)

These words breathe sincerity and gratitude. The whole life of the illustrious Jesuit reflected the love he so openly professed. The early religious years of the young levite do not seem to have differed very much from those of hundreds of his brethren, who were then laboring in France. His studies were solid, thorough, brilliant. He

taught grammar and literature (1650–1654), writing at the same time a Latin rhetoric, which is clear, methodical, brief and practical; he lectured on philosophy (1660) and, a little later, on that branch of science, for which nature had eminently fitted him, and which, in one sense, he never ceased from teaching during his whole career, moral theology (1663). During these years, unconsciously perhaps, he was sowing the seed of the harvest he was later on to reap. Daily contact in the classroom with the masterpieces of Greece and Rome liberalized his mind, philosophy broadened it, mathematics, in which he was so proficient that his superiors thought for a while of applying him exclusively to that science, gave him that rectitude of judgment, that precision of language and thought, with which in his sermons he proceeds from fact to fact, from principle to principle, from deduction to deduction, as if he were demonstrating a theorem in Euclid; moral theology enabled him to codify and coordinate those more general principles and rules of human conduct, which gave him such an insight into the secrets of the heart and made it possible for him to grasp deep down into the facts of life, and accurately to analyze the shifting phenomena of the soul.

Strange as it may appear, a professor's chair may not be, after all, the least favorable training-school

for a preacher. For nowhere, perhaps, does a man come into closer contact with his fellows. To be successful, the teacher must know his little world. He must possess some dramatic instinct, some imaginative insight into the mental conditions as well as the character, the thoughts and the needs of his pupils. In the class-room the teacher realizes the value of a few vital and elementary factors. He realizes the value of clearness, precision and method; he recognizes the power of apt illustration, the necessity of emphasis, of constant repetition and amplification, of being familiar and practical, of strengthening and reenforcing general and abstract principles by particular and concrete examples. And are not all these of the very essence of oratory? The teacher must, if he will not turn his class-room into a Purgatorio for his luckless pupils, conciliate, interest, win them. If he wishes, not merely to inform them, but really to form men, he must speak not only to their heads, but to their hearts. He must not merely make them understand, he must make them feel.

Bourdaloue will bring into the pulpit the qualities which for so many years he manifested as a teacher. Few sacred orators teach as clearly, as authoritatively as he does, and, says Nisard in his " History of French Literature," Bossuet not excepted, no preacher exerted such influence on his hearers.

The northern provinces, the cities of Amiens, Rennes, Rouen, had already listened to the young priest. At Rouen crowds flocked to hear him. Storekeepers left their counters, lawyers their cases and their clients in court, physicians their patients, artisans and workmen dropped hammer and saw and stopped in their toil to attend his sermons. Father d'Harrouis, to whom we owe these curious details, roguishly adds that when he himself preached a year after Bourdaloue in the same pulpit, he put things back in the good old order again. Nobody left his work or his shop to go and hear him! (Feugère. *"Bourdaloue. Sa Prédication et Son Temps,"* p. 11.)

Chapter IV

FORERUNNERS

HIS reputation had already preceded him to the capital when, in 1669, Bourdaloue spoke for the first time in the church of the Professed House of the Society. His first sermon showed the master. The Parisians, ever good judges when talent is concerned, were immediately won. They never cooled in their admiration and love for their favorite preacher. A sermon from him not only filled the church, but blocked the neighboring streets with coaches and men, and stopped all traffic. (Madame de Sévigné, Letter 27th, Feb., 1679.) For one of his Passion sermons places were held forty-eight hours before he spoke, all the great personages in town and court, as Madame de Sévigné tells us, sending their lackeys to the church to hold their seats for them. Bossuet heard his Jesuit rival preach and generously said: "He is the master of us all." With the exception of a year's absence in the South, Bourdaloue scarcely ever left the capital. As stated above he preached five Lenten and seven

Advent courses before the King. (Feugère. "*Bourdaloue.*" pp. 35–36; "*La Liste véritable et générale de tous les prédicateurs.*") He never wearied his audience, he never grew dull, stale or commonplace. The King, no bookman it is true, but endowed with a goodly share of judgment and common sense, for many years unfortunately but little of a Christian in his conduct, said that he preferred the repetitions of Father Bourdaloue to the finest original arguments of other preachers.

It has been advanced by some, and d'Alembert, if he did not originate, at least reechoed the statement, that Bourdaloue was practically the creator of French pulpit oratory. This is not quite true. The Jesuit has so many genuine titles to honor and fame, that we need not attribute to him what he would be the very first to repudiate. He is great enough in himself and does not need to be dressed in borrowed robes.

In the seventeenth century in France, parliamentary eloquence in the strict sense of the word did not exist. The press, represented by a few journals and reviews, such as the *Gazette,* the *Mercure* and the *Muse Historique,* exercised its influence in a restricted field. But the pulpit to some extent supplied the place of the news-sheet and the popular tribune. The preachers both at the court and in the towns and country districts of France

were the true chroniclers of the day. They presented a fairly accurate abstract of the times. The historian can now open the volumes of those popular preachers and he will find in them a faithful and lively picture of the manners and morals of that period.

The Catholic pulpit has been at all times the echo of the Faith of the Church and a reproduction of the lives of the people to which its warnings were addressed. Here we see the good that still lingers among all classes of men, and we are brought into contact with the ways of thought and conduct of the hearers. Never did chronicler or painter bring home to us in clearer or stronger form the atmosphere or the spirit of Byzantine civilization or of pre-Reformation Germany than St. John Chrysostom or Geiler von Kaisersberg. In the preachers of the closing Middle Ages, like St. Bernardine of Siena and St. Vincent Ferrer, we recognize admirable portrait painters of the generation to which they preached the lessons of the Gospel. The same can be said of the fiery pulpiteers of the *Ligue* like Claude Matthieu who were an echo of the resentment of the people, which was substantially righteous and just, because they feared a betrayal of the old Catholic traditions of the French monarchy. But Matthieu and his followers, nevertheless, were grossly exaggerated in manner and style.

The *Ligue* preachers were followed by a finer school.

St. Francis de Sales, St. Vincent de Paul, Cardinal Pierre de Bérulle, the Founder of the French Oratorians, had already spoken with the natural simplicity and unction of genuine Christian eloquence, though their manner showed traces of the false taste and standards of the times. Bossuet had been preaching for several years, and though his sermons are not to be compared with his Funeral Orations, he could not preach without being simple and sublime, familiar yet refined, all movement, passion and fire. Mascaron, who, in spite of a rude, unpolished style and bad taste, has now and then the ring of the orator; Fléchier, whose funeral oration of Marshal Turenne is so beautiful that, did we not know it to be his, we might be inclined to ascribe it to a greater name; Senault, Desmares, Bourgoing, Fromentières, Singlin, Texier, and last but not least, the blind Oratorian, Le Jeune, whose sermons are an arsenal of ecclesiastical lore, full of unction, originality, keen observation and knowledge of the human heart, had done much to rid the French pulpit of its defects. A Jesuit, Father Claude de Lingendes, not to be mistaken for his cousin Jean de Lingendes, Bishop of Sarlat, was one of the most popular preachers of his day. He had some of the

gifts of Bourdaloue himself, some of his faultless dialectical skill, with the same purity of doctrine, the same lofty morality, and was thus no small factor in this renewal of sacred eloquence in his country. The works of Claude de Lingendes published in Latin, became, as it were, the common property of the religious brethren of Bourdaloue, and the younger orator did not hesitate to dip now and then into their pages and to borrow, sparingly, it is true, a passage here and there and to weld and fuse it into his own composition. No man less than Bourdaloue needed such adventitious help; that he used it at all, is an honor to the older master.

Some of the preachers here mentioned, Bourdaloue heard no doubt with pleasure and profit, some he read with surprise at the discordant elements mixed in their work. Others he listened to with amazement; for shocking defects, in spite of a vast improvement everywhere visible, still lingered in the pulpits of the capital. Bourdaloue, eminently serious and reasonable, and whose natural qualities had been refined and spiritualized by prayer and study, could not understand the false standards then prevailing in the pulpit. He did not think that in order to speak of God, of His works and His love, of the mysteries of the Incarnation and Redemption, to announce the truths of reli-

gion, to teach men their duties, to console them in their sorrows, and to lift their hearts above the perishable things of time to the nobler things of eternity and the soul, it was necessary to overload the style with tawdry ornament, to display a pedantic erudition, to sink the subject and the thought under a dead load of quotations sacred and profane, with a running commentary of quips and jests as contrary to the preacher's office and dignity as to the judgment and Catholic sense of an intelligent hearer. Loret, a witty rhymester of the day, in his *Muse Historique,* March 15, 1652, thus describes a popular preacher. His doggerel is here freely translated *à la Hudibras:*

Il cite hébreu, grec et latin,
Saint Ambroise, Saint Augustin,
Saint Hiérosme, Saint Chrysostome,
Saint Paul et le Deutéronome,
Les Proverbes de Solomon,
Et le Paralipomenon.

He quotes me Greek, he quotes me Latin,
And Hebrew too he stands quite pat in;
Then gives me Jerome, Great Augustine,
Then Chrysostom and then St. Justin,
Next Moses, Paul, and Wise King Solomon,
And last, not least, Paralipomenon.

What Pierre Corneille had begun for the stage, Bourdaloue finally settled and perfected

for the pulpit. He did it so well and on lines so methodical, so easily followed on the surface at least, so clearly marked off, that the very perfection of his craftsmanship led others astray. They tried to build just as he did, but without his genius. They might follow his plans, they could not possibly rear the same stately edifice. They tried to run their weaker ideas into the large and symmetrical moulds which the stream of the master's thoughts alone could fill. They tried to draw the bow which none but the hero's arm could bend, and from which he alone could speed the bolt true and unerring to its aim. Bourdaloue had a lofty concept of his office. His ideals were noble and a man is what his ideals are. He clearly realized the nature of sacred eloquence, fully understood its advantages, saw its dangers and its drawbacks. The Jesuit orator fully knew that the advantages of sacred eloquence cannot be denied even by those who may smile at the dogmas it proclaims. The sacred orator, he was well aware, had a wonderful field before him. The truths of reason, the great facts of revelation, the mysteries of faith await his creative word to live, to energize anew in the minds and hearts of his hearers. The herald of Christ addresses the whole man, he appeals to faith and reason, to the fancy and imagination, to the will, to the heart.

Chapter V

WHAT IS THE MESSAGE?

THE Catholic priest brings into the pulpit an authority, a prestige which no other man shares in a like degree. Men do not see in him the representative of a party or the exponent of a school. They look upon him as the ambassador of God, a mediator between them and their Maker, the expounder of the secrets of the Most High, a doctor in Israel, a physician of souls. He is a voice of warning and denunciation to vice and crime, the friend of the poor, the shield of the oppressed, the father of his flock. Like John the Baptist he cries out to the heedless throng: "Prepare ye the ways of the Lord, make straight his paths." Imitating St. Paul, and like him triumphantly pointing to the Cross, he can face an unbelieving and scoffing generation and exclaim: "For both the Jews require signs, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews indeed a stumbling block, and unto the Gentiles foolishness: But unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God

and the wisdom of God" (I Cor. I, 22–24).

Like Job he paints the might of Him "who shutteth up the stars as it were under a seal, who alone spreadeth out the heavens and walketh upon the waves of the sea" (Job IX, 7, 8), and muses with him over the sorrows, the nothingness of man, "who cometh forth as a flower and is destroyed, and fleeth as a shadow and never continueth in the same state" (Job XIV, 2). Another Isaias, he can picture the fall of Babylon, and in it the fall of luxury, infidelity, deceit, cruelty, worldliness, tyranny, pride. With Ezekiel, and clad with more than mortal power, he will stand before a generation dead in sin, prophesy to the lifeless bones, and joint will knit to joint, bone to bone, and the dead will rise. A second Jeremy, he wails over the departed glories of Sion, over the virgin daughter of Jerusalem sorrowing in the dust. With the poet of Genesis he can paint the splendor of creation's dawn, or with the Seer of Patmos sound the trumpet of Judgment Day.

He can summon before us scenes of melting pathos and tragic power. At his voice the heavens open and our eyes behold the beauty and the glory of the City of God, our ears are ravished with the song the Virgins sing. His summons drags his trembling hearers to the gates of hell, flings

them open, and makes the flames of the eternal prison-house, more eloquent than his words, paint the punishments of crime and sin. He leads us to the crib of Bethlehem, to the Holy House nestling on the terraced slopes of Nazareth, white and stainless like the sainted Three that dwell under its roof, to Calvary's blood-stained crest, to show us what a God will do and suffer when He loves!

No speaker comes better armed before his hearers than the Catholic priest, no matter how humble he be, how weak his natural powers, provided he be only faithful to his sacred trust. Bourdaloue, with all his genius, knew that the main, the paramount factor in his work, was the dignity of his office and the absolute truth and justice of his cause. Hence the tone of conviction and authority which we feel in everything he wrote and spoke. For, the Catholic priest does not tell his hearers of doubtful doctrines, he speaks to them with no faltering or uncertain accents. His credentials are without a flaw, his message is truth. In him the past revives; from his lips re-echo the words of Christ Himself, from them falls the teaching of Apostles, Doctors and Martyrs; to him flashes back the accordant cry of thousands of other teachers heralding the same truths.

The bar, the senate, is an arena, a battle-ground; "the Catholic pulpit is a throne." There a sover-

eign rules. Before that sovereign, and he may be a peasant's or a prince's son, all social distinctions of rank and power disappear. Be he a Jesuit in the West End of London or a barefooted friar in the Vatican, or Vieira amid the poor slaves of Brazil; be he de Ravignan, Monsabré or Lacordaire in Notre Dame, Bernard before Louis VII and his mail-clad barons at Vézelay, an American priest in a mining town of Pennsylvania, Ambrose before the last of the Romans at Milan, king, peasant, fashionable lady, soldier or factory hand, consul and plebeian, all bow before him. Before him wealth and birth are forgotten. Men remember nought but their common humanity and brotherhood, their common sorrows and duties, their common origin, their common end. The sacred orator has no enemies before him. All condemn what he condemns, believe what he teaches, praise what he extols; all throb with the emotions he feels beating in his heart.

But if the Catholic pulpit has so many advantages, Bourdaloue was fully aware that it is not without its dangers and its pitfalls. In the discussions at the bar and the debates of the senate, the very clash of opinions and the shock of contending forces react upon the speakers. There the gladiators measure swords and steel bites steel. There is something spectacular and dra-

matic in the struggle which summons the champions to put forth their whole strength. In such a battle it is true to say that the enemy is our dearest friend. Bismarck rouses the best that is in Windthorst, Aeschines awakes the lion in Demosthenes, Hayne's Parthian arrows and dashing cavalry raids stir to action Webster's heavy guns, while Suffolk's taunts thrust the thunderbolt into Chatham's hand. But in the pulpit, that factor is missing. The speaker does not find in his audience that external opposition which puts him upon his mettle and electrifies into life his slumbering energies. The audience does not so immediately react upon him. Hence the orator must be, if the expression be allowed, self-magnetized, he must react upon himself or he will lack the power to drive his thoughts home.

And there is another danger which proved fatal for many a preacher in Bourdaloue's time, but which he took special care to avoid. The sacred orator has a field so wide and such latitude in the choice of his matter and subject; his training often is so scholastic and technical, his knowledge of books is at times so much broader than his knowledge of men, that he not unfrequently falls into the general, the abstruse, the vague. He remains on the surface when he ought to delve down into the core and heart of things. Too anxious to

move the passions, he often stirs only the nervous sensibilities of his hearers. He mistakes the tear-dimmed eye for the sorrowing and contrite heart. Ambitious to treat his subject with fitting dignity and splendor, he too frequently becomes, as many whom Bourdaloue heard in his younger days, declamatory and theatrical, forgetting that he must not play to the groundlings, and that the judicious and the wise "seek Divine simplicity in him who handles things Divine." He must often speak on themes familiar to the people, which they have heard again and again, which have been explained by lips more eloquent than his, truths, facts, mysteries in the sacred presence of which they have grown up from childhood, and upon which, with rare exceptions, he can scarcely say anything original or new; and yet he cannot afford to be tame or dull.

These difficulties Bourdaloue conquered with masterly skill. He had formed to himself, as we have seen, a noble idea of what a sacred orator ought to be. He was too single-minded, too forgetful of self and too true to the religious standards he had adopted, too anxious that his words should do good to the souls of his hearers, to allow himself to be dazzled by popularity and to become a mere fashionable preacher, with no more behind his message than behind the borrowed emotions of

some favorite actor of the hour. We have in his "Thoughts," a paragraph or two, in which we can see for ourselves what were his ideas on this subject. In his practical way, he is lamenting the fact — and how suitable to our modern needs his words are! — that the Faithful do not know the dispositions necessary for the Sacrament of Penance, that they take no trouble to learn them, and that for the most part, they look upon these considerations as beneath their notice. Continuing he says:

> Our preachers, if not careful, have their own share in keeping up this dangerous illusion. For their principle is to treat in the pulpit certain lofty themes only, fancying as they do, that elementary instructions are suitable only for humbler folk and for the country. In this assuredly they are mistaken, both because they fail in one of the most important obligations of their ministry, that of teaching the main duties of their religion to all classes and conditions of men, and because they rise at times beyond all proper bounds, and vainly soar to heights where we lose sight of them, and where they lose themselves. (*"Pensées,"* Vol. IV, p. 337.)

And these were the homely and practical views of our orator, when one of the most cultured audiences the world has ever seen, was to hear him. But he knew it was his duty to preach them. When duty called Bourdaloue never wavered.

Chapter VI

THE SPACIOUS DAYS OF LOUIS LE GRAND

BOURDALOUE appeared at the court of Louis XIV, when the glories of the Great Monarch's reign were reaching their zenith. Few men will question the statement that from the middle of the seventeenth century, to Louis's death in 1715, France produced a literature so serious and noble, so close in classic form to the literatures of the palmy days of Greece and Rome; an art, if not marked with great power, nor strikingly original, at least so elegant and refined; such a harvest of men in every walk of life, in the sciences, at the bar, in the cabinet and in the field, that the age must be ranked with those periods in history called after Pericles, Augustus, Leo, Elizabeth, in which the world's efforts seem to culminate, and to which posterity must ever afterwards look back for guidance and light.

Of that period, Louis Bourdaloue saw the best and brightest days. When we review those years, we cannot fail to see that they had their

dark spots and shadows. Underneath all that pomp and glory, were hidden evils against which Bourdaloue himself was the first to raise his voice. Many too willingly imitated the vices of the King, but hypocritically aped his repentance. The rights of the lower classes and the people were, if not trampled upon, selfishly ignored. War depleted the nation's treasury and drained the nation's blood. But few ages have been prolific of such eminent men or witnessed such great deeds.

There is in French literature a page "which every schoolboy knows," famous for its roll-call of all the splendors that gathered then around the throne. (Villemain, "*Discours et Mélanges*," p. 218 ff.; Maury, "*Discours de Réception à l'Académie Française*"; Voltaire, "*Siècle de Louis XIV*," passim.) It shows us the charmed circle in which our humble Jesuit moved but which never dazzled him. It recounts the successful campaigns of Louis and his captains, the victories, the conquered provinces, the captured towns. It musters before us the soldiers, the statesmen and judges, the poets, the painters, the orators of the day. For more than a century, the nation had been in the throes of a new birth. It was now ready to begin a new life. The seed had been sown, and there was at last to be rich fruitage. Louis XIV had an instinct for dazzling deeds

and dazzling men. He knew how to recognize and how to foster genius.

When Bourdaloue appeared at court in 1670 the spring tides of glory and prosperity were running fast and high. French troops officered by court dandies, bejeweled, bewigged and perfumed "like any milliner," but who fought like demons, as their Moslem foe thought them to be, had soundly beaten the Turks at St. Gotthard in Hungary, and in Crete. Flanders was conquered, and while France extended its frontiers, trade, commerce and internal improvements grew apace. A fine canal linked together the waters of the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, vast and spacious harbors were dug to shelter fleets which carried the standard of France to the shores of the St. Lawrence and the ports of India. New industries were founded and patronized, the arts revived, the colonnades of the Louvre rose in their classic proportions, the gardens of Versailles spread out the mosaic of their lawns and grottoes, their lakes and parterres, their driveways and dells.

Everywhere there was a contest of genius to do honor to France and the King. Corneille made the theatre ring with the dying echoes of a voice once potent enough to summon Roman heroes from the grave, and to make them speak in words not too unworthy of the lords and

masters of the world. In "*Iphigénie*," "*Andromaque*," "*Athalie*," "*Esther*," Racine recalled the pathos of Euripides and the perfection of the purest tragic art, while Charles Perrault gave a definite form and a new charm to the fascinating tales of Puss in Boots and Little Red Riding-Hood, and Galland, the Orientalist, translated into French the bewitching stories of the "Arabian Nights." Boileau legislated in verse for the poets and the writers of the age; La Fontaine studied man in the cricket and the ant, in the lion, the wolf and the fox; Molière, with all the caustic wit of Aristophanes, occasionally with his grossness, ridiculed the foibles of the age, at times sneered at the most sacred relations of life with a sarcasm no wit can ever make us forgive. A long line of fighting captains equaled only by the group of marshals of the First Empire, or the generals of our Civil War, Condé and Turenne, Boufflers and Luxembourg, Vendôme, Catinat, Créqui and Villars, commanded the armies of Louis; Château-Renaud and Tourville, Duquesne, Jean Bart and Pointis and Forbin, led his fleets and his sea rovers; Vauban built his forts. Ministers like Colbert, de Lionne, and that pupil of Bourdaloue, Louvois, sat at his council-board; d'Estrades and de Torcy negotiated his treaties, Bossuet, Huet, Fléchier and Fénelon, educated his children.

Noble judges and jurists, like the Lamoignons, the life-long friends of the humble religious, or the Séguiers, the d'Aguesseaus and the Domats, interpreted the laws and statutes of his realm; Mansard, Claude and Charles Perrault built his palaces, Le Brun painted his battles, Le Nôtre laid out his gardens, Puget, Girardon, Coysevox and the Coustous adorned them with statuary; Nanteuil inaugurated the art of modern engraving and preserved the features of his Ministers and marshals; Bossuet, Fléchier, Mascaron, Massillon, de la Rue taught him his duties, sometimes boldly reprimanded his vices. La Bruyère portrayed in his "*Caractères*" the very "form and pressure" of the time, just as Saint-Simon, in his "*Mémoires*," painted for us full-length portraits of the celebrities of the day, drawn with all their faults and imperfections on their heads, just as Madame de Sévigné, in her "*Lettres*," gave us the interesting nothings, the gossip and small talk, and sometimes — Madame la Marquise will excuse us — the malodorous scandals of the court. Bernard de Montfaucon practically discovered the art of Greek paleography, Mabillon laid the foundation of "diplomatics," while Richard Simon, in spite of grave errors and unsound opinions condemned by Bossuet and by the Church, began a new, but not judiciously inaugurated era in Biblical criticism, by subjecting

the more general questions concerning the Bible to a comprehensive and scientific treatment.

But it was not only in the field of secular, scholastic, literary and artistic accomplishment that the Age of Louis XIV won its place among the foremost epochs of civilization. It was also an age of virile faith. It gave us canonized Saints. In every rank of society, almost on the steps of the throne as well as in the solitude of the cloister, the Church brought forth flowers of holiness and repentance which proved her vitality and power. The beginnings of the reign witnessed the marvels of charity of St. Vincent de Paul and Blessed Louise de Marillac, although the foundation of the Sisters of Charity belongs rather to the reign of Louis XIII. But St. John Baptist de la Salle, St. Margaret Mary, together with Blessed Eudes, Blessed Grignon de Montfort, the Venerable Claude de la Colombière astonished the age by their virtues. St. John Baptist de la Salle by the foundation of the Brothers of the Christian Schools deserves to be called, not only the friend of the poor and one of the foremost leaders in the cause of popular education, but also one of the noblest promoters of the cause of democracy and true civilization. In his own day St. John Baptist de la Salle had as worthy imitators and unselfish rivals the saintly César de Bus, Charles Démia at Lyons

and Nicolas Barré at Rouen, whose names, little known to the outside world, yet deserve a place among the champions of popular education and the friends of the poor. And from 1650 to 1686, as many as sixteen Congregations of religious women were organized for the education of girls.

If the court was scandalized by the weaknesses of Louise de la Vallière, it was rebuked and edified by her repentance and her long and austere life in the solitude of the Carmel. Jean le Bouthillier de Rancé, after a career unworthy of his priestly calling, found refuge at last from himself in the penitential austerities of the Cistercian monastery of La Trappe which he reformed and brought back to its original rule. In Paris, just as the reign of Louis reached its acme of glory, the Jesuit Alexander de Rhodes founded the *Société des Missions Etrangères,* whose apostolic labors in the Far East, in Corea and Japan, form one of the most stirring episodes in the history of the Catholic missions. Amid the snows of Canada, men like D'Allouez, Dablon, and Marquette were carrying on the missionary work begun by the heroic Jean de Brébeuf and the martyred Isaac Jogues. Noble women like Marie de l'Incarnation and Margaret Bourgeois were imitating in the New World, the virtues of Teresa of Jesus in the Old. Zealous Bishops like Laval at

Quebec, imitated the piety of St. Francis de Sales.

At home the old Faith was strong in the hearts of the people. Missionaries like Grignon de Montfort and César de Bus, like the Jesuits Maunoir and Le Nobletz, produced lasting results for the conversion and sanctification of souls. In spite of the chilling effects of Jansenism, devotion to the Blessed Sacrament was widespread and fervent. Notwithstanding some exaggeration in its practises, the famous *Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement* fostered the spirit of a genuine religious and social revival. Following the example of the Venerable Olier, and the priests of St. Sulpice, the clergy, especially in the lower ranks, lived strenuous lives of toil and self-sacrificing labor for their flocks. Court prelates at times disedified both court and people by their worldliness and misconduct. But their evil influence was confined to a narrow circle. In that Versailles which witnessed so many scandals, Fénelon's pupil, the Duc de Bourgogne, the Marcellus of the monarchy, so cruelly snatched away before his time, gave early promise by his talents and virtues of recalling some of the glories of St. Louis to the throne of his ancestors. Alas!

Ostendent terris hunc tantum fata, neque ultra
Esse sinent. . . .

In the highest ranks of society, Cabinet officers, admirals and marshals of France, led lives of the

austerest piety. Claude Le Pelletier, Comptroller General of the Treasury, spent the time he could spare from his official duties in the solitude of a Carthusian monastery; Chancellor Phélypeaux de Pontchartrain passed his last days under the roof of the Fathers of the Oratory, just as Alain Emmanuel de Coëtlogon, Admiral and Marshal of France, lieutenant in many a sea fight of D'Estrées and Tourville, sought shelter from the cares and treachery of the world in the Professed House of the Jesuits of Paris. That Duc de Saint-Simon, whose "*Mémoires*" so ruthlessly paint the men and manners of the time, yearly withdrew to the grim loneliness of La Trappe to make a retreat. To the credit of the age, it had not yet entirely lost sight of the truths of religion. Sin, eternity, the sentiment of moral responsibility, still meant something for the nation and the individual. In the bourgeoisie as at the court, figures were found like those of Pelletier Destouches, a Catholic social worker, a forerunner of Ozanam and Count Albert de Mun; of Ferdinand Jobelot at Besançon, and of that gallant soldier, François Armand de Courville, *Brigadier des Armées du Roi,* who, by his zeal and piety, may be called the lay chaplain-general to the troops under his command. In the cities as in the country districts, the parish clergy were loved by the people, whose life they shared,

and vocations to the religious state among men and women were numerous. The old Faith was rooted deep in the soil of France and charity was active.

It was thus upon a crowded and brilliant stage that Bourdaloue was called to speak and act. He knew nearly all his illustrious contemporaries. Bossuet honored and admired him; Boileau and he were bosom-friends, and they could warmly discuss literature and theology, and though both quick-tempered and accomplished word-fencers, their discussions never cooled the friendship of a lifetime. The Lamoignons loved the good Jesuit with something like real tenderness. Can there be a nobler tribute to a friend than the letter of C. F. de Lamoignon written a short while after the death of the great orator, and in which he says that during the forty-five years he had lived with Father Bourdaloue and enjoyed his society, he had no secrets for him, and that the saintly religious knew all his virtues and all his faults. (*"Lettre de M. C. F. Lamoignon,"* etc.) Simple but noble panegyric to the candor and sincerity of the magistrate and the priest alike! The King knew Bourdaloue, knew the amiable man and the fearless priest, esteemed him highly and even took his part when the angry courtiers murmured against his apostolic boldness. After the outspoken words

of the preacher, when, as Madame de Sévigné tells us, Bourdaloue "thundered" against vice, Louis simply said: "Father Bourdaloue has done his duty; let us do ours." Madame de Sévigné is almost extravagant in her praises of her favorite. For her, there is no one like Bourdaloue, he is the "Great Pan," "the Divine," he preaches "divinely well."

And when many of these lords and ladies, Ministers and marshals of France, stand upon the brink of eternity, they summon the Jesuit to their bedside to hear their last confession and prepare them to meet their God. To mention but a few names: That picturesque, but erratic princess, the Great Mademoiselle, Anne Marie Louise d'Orléans, Duchesse de Montpensier, granddaughter of Henry IV, who during the War of the Fronde, after coolly eating the confectionery sent her by the Mayor of Orléans, just as coolly captured that gentleman and his city with the help of two ladies in waiting. (Higginson's "Mademoiselle's Campaigns"); the mighty Minister Colbert, who reformed the nation's finances and organized its navy; the wretched Angélique de Fontanges; Chancellor Le Tellier; the unfortunate de Rohan sentenced to death for treason; the Princess de Monaco; Marshal de Luxembourg, the dashing victor of Fleurus and Landen, all these

and more were prepared by him for death and eternity. Could there be a finer commentary on the efficacy and unction of his eloquence? And it is no wonder that his sermons exerted such an influence, for behind the spoken word of the orator, all felt the beating of the apostle's heart, all revered that which must ever be greater than the work, the man.

And the man, this is the unanimous testimony of his own religious brethren, of his Superiors (*"Lettre du Père Martineau,"* etc. *"Sermons,"* Vol. I, p. 17), of the gossips, memoir-writers, historians and chroniclers of the day, was essentially upright, honorable, unworldly, humble, prayerful, ever glad to withdraw from the pomp and glitter of the court to sit for hours in his confessional, to preach to the outcasts of society in hospital and jail, to watch by the bedside of some dying peasant; he was a holy priest in his every act and word. Outside of her canonized Saints, there are few of her sons to whom the Society of Jesus can point with more legitimate pride than to Louis Bourdaloue.

LOUIS XIV

Chapter VII

GENTLEMEN, THE KING!

LOUIS BOURDALOUE preached twelve "stations" or courses of sermons before Louis XIV and his court. Seven times he preached the Advent course, namely, during the years 1670, 1684, 1686, 1689, 1691, 1693 and 1697. Five series of Lenten sermons were delivered by him, in the following order: in 1672, 1674, 1676, 1680, 1682. In 1689 he opened another Lenten course. But the subsequent sermons of that Lent were preached by his brother Jesuit, Father de la Rue. (Dangeau, "*Journal*," February, 1689.) Exclusive of exhortations and instructions, Father Bretonneau, Bourdaloue's first editor, salvaged 124 discourses of the great preacher. Of these, forty, that is practically one-third, are addressed to the monarch in person. But, says Father Lauras ("*Bourdaloue. Sa Vie et ses Oeuvres*," Vol. I, p. 230), these sermons were not composed or spoken exclusively for Louis XIV, in the same manner as the "*Petit Carême*" sermons of Massillon were composed for the boy-king, Louis XV. Bourdaloue,

while undoubtedly making it the chief point of his oratorical and apostolic strategy to win Louis from the sinful ways in which his passions were leading him, did not forget the court, the courtiers, the fine lords and ladies around him. Against them he directed many of his shafts, while at the same time his words reached not a few noble souls in his audience, who in the midst of a luxurious and corrupt society were leading lives of more than ordinary virtue and holiness.

Bourdaloue did not confine himself to the court and the courtiers. He also spoke in the Church of the Professed House of the Society of Jesus in the capital, at Notre Dame, at St. Jacques-de-la-Boucherie, at St. Eustache, in the hospitals, prisons and religious communities of Paris. In the south, notably at Montpellier, among the Calvinists, he had the same success as in the capital, just as before, at Rennes and Amiens, when quite a young man, he had so strangely appealed to the sturdy and robust faith of Picard and Breton.

One of the striking successes of the Jesuit's eloquence and of the power and unction of his word, was the lasting effect it had on the heart of the *Grand Monarque*. In the conversion of Louis the eloquence of Bourdaloue was not, it is true, the only factor. In that conversion, Madame

de Maintenon played a prominent and noble part. Yet had Bourdaloue's eloquence been wanting, Louis might not have returned to his duty, or at least his return would have been delayed so long that his old age might have been without honor and have presented a spectacle as degrading as that offered by the close of the reign of Louis XV. In the case of Louis XIV, through the virtues of Bourdaloue, France and the Catholic Church were spared that spectacle. Twelve years passed before the King yielded finally and unreservedly to the assaults made upon him by the Jesuit preacher. But he did yield at last. Tact, patience, tenacity, gentleness, combined with faith, noble talents reenforced by constant prayer, at last carried the day. After the Lent of 1682, Louis remembered, what for more than twenty years he had forgotten, that he was a Christian king, and returned to the practise of a religion which he had never indeed denied or even doubted, but whose moral code he had set aside, not without remorse and struggle, in the heat of his passions and the intoxication of his pride.

Bourdaloue preached the first time before the King, for the first Sunday in Advent, 1670. Louis had climbed the height of political and worldly glory. He had also sounded the depths of personal degradation and shame.

He had just reached his thirty-second year. Born in 1638, a king when he was five years old, declared a major in his fourteenth year, he had been reared and bred in royalty. Five days after the death of his father, Louis XIII, May 14, 1643, his cradle had been decked with the laurels of victory won from the Spaniards by the young Duc d'Enghien, the future Prince de Condé, on the field of Rocroy.

The external history of the reign of Louis XIV does not concern us here. When Bourdaloue came to court, the King was at the height of his power. France was the leading country in Europe. Her arms and her arts, her commerce, her statesmen, her navies and her policies dominated all Europe. What interests us in this sketch is Louis himself, his manners and his morals, the life, the atmosphere of that court where the black gown of the Jesuit might be seen side by side with the ruffles and the laces of those bejewelled lords and ladies, whose names have come down to history in the "*Mémoires*" of Saint-Simon or the "*Journal*" of Dangeau.

The troublous times of the Fronde had been ill-suited to the training of the young King. The constant alarms and changes of residence to which the court had been subjected in that petty war, had left but little time and leisure for the education

of the future monarch. The boy learnt little. "As a child," writes Boulenger ("The Seventeenth Century," p. 173) "his governesses had generally left him to the care of their waiting-women." In those days he was a fair-haired, winsome lad, who at times could play a boy's pranks, and though destined to be in later years a model of deportment, the glass of fashion and the mould of form, he then had plebeian tastes. He had a boy's ravenous appetite, for, as Madame de Maintenon tells us, he ate everything he could lay his hands on. He played with the sons and daughters of the valets and waiting-women of the lords and ladies of the court in very democratic fashion. Of book knowledge, in spite of the fact that the learned Péréfixe de Beaumont was his tutor, he had little. Nor did he show much taste for study. His governor, M. de Villeroi, who sincerely loved the boy, realized, with unconscious selfishness perhaps, that the lad would one day be his master. He did not therefore urge him to uncongenial pursuits.

But the boy's mother, Anne of Austria, did one thing for Louis. She taught him his prayers and respect for religion. It was one lesson Louis took to heart. He never was a skeptic. He was a thorough believer in the mysteries of his Faith. He reverenced both them and the ministers who announced them, although for so many years he did

not follow their teaching. Cardinal Mazarin, who had the nominal title of superintendent of the King's education, had little trust in book-learning and insisted more on practical things than theories. The monarch had sense enough to become aware of his own short-comings. In 1661, then three and twenty, he resolved to go back to school. He appears to have made some serious effort to carry out the plan. But the times and the temptations in his path did not allow him much leisure for that generous purpose. He did, however, pick up a serviceable knowledge of Italian. It is true that he had a fair and capable teacher, a niece of Mazarin, that Maria Mancini who at one time not only had made up her mind to marry her royal pupil, but had well-nigh succeeded in doing so, had not her wily uncle ruled otherwise. Louis had little if any Latin, but he read Spanish. He loved music, enjoyed it immensely in Lulli's and Quinault's operas, and relished Racine, Molière, Corneille, and good preaching.

It has been the custom among a certain class of historians hostile to Louis and all his policies to paint him as a dress-parade king, a *roi-soleil,* a stage-monarch of paint, puff, and paste, a manikin of royalty. In reality he was nothing of the kind. Outwardly, even when all reasonable allowance is made for the flatteries of his courtiers and

contemporaries, he was no mean presentment of royalty. He was not unhandsome in feature. Tall and strong, muscular even, he bore himself as nearly all the Bourbons have done, with uncommon grace and dignity. He had fine eyes and an air about him that commanded respect and carried authority. His head was shapely and covered with fine chestnut locks which fell in waves over his shoulders. Of these locks he was not a little vain, and even when a ponderously majestic wig crowned them, he still managed that some should escape cover, and carelessly, as it were, betray their presence. His mouth showed decision and pride, his voice was clear, commanding and round. Always feeling himself as it were on parade, he never lost his temper or his self-control.

He was an accomplished dancer and handled a billiard cue deftly. He was also a fine shot, a splendid rider, and could drive a coach and four as well as any of the fox-hunting, horse-loving squires of any county in England. His constitution was of iron, and more than once he was known to have ridden as many as 120 miles in a single day. When after the death of Mazarin, he took the reins of power in his own hands, he tired out his secretaries and Ministers of State by the incessant round of meetings and conferences he held with them. Eight hours a day at the council board was for

years his daily custom. Balls, hunting parties, jousts, banquets never seemed to tire him. No matter what his pleasures, they never interfered with his business as king, "*son métier de roi.*" His heart might be given for a while to Madame de Montespan, or Mademoiselle de Fontanges, or Mademoiselle de la Vallière; his head was given to France, and his hands held the reins of its government with a tenacity of purpose, and in some things with a noble conception of the nation's destiny, which nothing could check or change.

One of his boyish traits he kept almost to the end of his life, his appetite. Saint-Simon describes it in a classic paragraph: "So hugely and so solidly did he eat, at night and in the morning, and so regularly too, that nobody could grow accustomed to the sight. . . . I have often seen the King eat four full plates of soup of various kinds, a whole pheasant, a partridge, a great plate of salad, two large slices of ham, mutton dressed with gravy and garlic, a dish of pastry, and after all that, fruit and hard-boiled eggs. (Boulenger: "The Seventeenth Century," p. 175.) Yet, in spite of that Gargantuan appetite he was no Vitellius, nor even a gourmet or an epicure. Had Louis learnt to tame his passions, his love of luxury and pleasure, as well as his inordinate ambition and pride, he would have been an admirable king.

His intellect was not of a high order. Its culture was superficial. But he had learnt from Mazarin one secret at least. He knew how to turn to the practical affairs of life. He was judicious, thoughtful and tremendously hard-working. He had strong common sense. Well aware of his own shortcomings, he had the art of discerning talents in others and, with rare exceptions, when by some at least, he was suspected of jealousy, of making use of them. He surrounded himself with able men. Hence some of the most brilliant pages in the annals of his reign are filled with the achievements of the captains, Ministers and administrators to whom he entrusted the conduct of his armies and the destinies of his policies. The King's good sense roused Boileau's enthusiasm. Not all is flattery in the tribute which the author of the "*Lutrin*" pays to his royal master. "This prince never speaks without having thought; everything he says is admirably constructed." He might have added similar praise on the subject of the King's writings, for according to Boulenger (*Op. cit.*, p. 177) the "Memoirs and Letters of Louis XIV" are models of correctness and good taste, of lucid eloquence, clear and straightforward in expression. Besides this, although without deep affection, even in the case of the idols at whose shrine he worshiped and which he so easily forgot once

the infatuation was over, he was by nature kindly, indulgent and forgiving. He had strong prejudices, but he was willing to listen to anyone who showed any eagerness to enlighten him. His secretaries, Ministers and officers always found him an attentive and courteous listener. In his heart he meant the good of his people. He too often made the mistake of thinking that the nation's welfare was identified with the greatness of Louis, and the success of the narrow policies of the House of Bourbon.

He was not absolutely to blame. By tradition, both of family and to some extent of race, he was a firm believer in the divine right of kings. It would be unfair to judge Louis by our standards. Though the religion which he professed taught him that he had to rule not for his own ends, but for his people's good, he did not consider himself a mere trustee for his people and its steward, but to a certain extent its master and its owner, or at least the arbiter of its destinies. For whatever he did, good or bad, he had not to defer to their will or their views; he was accountable and responsible to God alone. Hence his interference in matters of religion. There does not seem to be too much exaggeration in what Boulenger (*Op. cit.*, pp. 178–179) says of the views of Louis on the various functions of ad-

ministration and government: " The Bishops were in a sense the sovereign's chaplains, the officers of justice or finance were his police and his cashiers, the *intendants* were his business agents, the Ministers and courtiers were the servants of his house. . . ." Louis identified the glory of France, its welfare and greatness with his own and that of his family. It was a misfortune for both the King and the nation.

Lord Acton (" The Cambridge Modern History," Vol. V, " The Age of Louis XIV," p. 2) describes Louis XIV as " by far the ablest man who was born in modern times on the steps of the throne." When we remember that he personally directed the destinies of France for fifty-five years, that he made his country the leading power in Europe, and that even when beaten, he never was entirely crushed, never lost his dignity nor the respect of his enemies, it is not hard to concur in such a verdict. Among his virtues were those of method, perseverance, industry. He used to say that it was ingratitude and presumption towards God, as well as injustice and tyranny towards man, to wish to reign without hard work. But he worked too much for the extension of his own power and glory. His personal ambitions absorbed him. Those ambitions were the cause of all his disasters. They put into motion those evil influences, both in the

social and political life of France, which less than a hundred years after his death, brought about the ruin of the French monarchy.

It was the misfortune of Louis that the school of politics in which he was bred was one of trickery and deceit. The policies of Richelieu and Mazarin to which he naturally fell heir were tortuous and lacking in that straightforward honesty which is the only safeguard of cabinets and kings as well as of nations. Moreover, everything around Louis, the stiff, solemn and artificial etiquette that regulated his every movement at the council-board, as well as at Mass or at the banquet-table, and modeled his suite on his pattern, made him feel that he was a being apart, the center around which everything and everybody must revolve.

He was surrounded with honors as fulsome as were ever paid to a Roman Caesar. The incense and adulation, the constant apotheosis of which he was the object, made him at last believe that he could do no wrong. It only dawned upon him late in life, several years after Bourdaloue began his preaching at court, that he was scandalizing the nation by his sinful life and by the open sanction which he well-nigh forced the court to give to his passions. His morals then were those of a Turkish sultan in his harem. He had the deplorable art of being able to transform his

passions into virtues. His court, silenced by its own servility and degraded through its sinful participation in the follies of the master, listened without effective protest to a royal decree, shocking both to the pride of the French nation and its yet virile Catholicism, which declared that the children of Louis and the Marquise de Montespan were eligible to the French Crown.

The fumes of the constant incense went to the monarch's head. Some of the adulation he received is almost incomprehensible, so fulsome does it sound. Byzantinism never went further in the days of the Greek Empire. In 1663, when Louis was deeply plunged in a life of disorder, and Louise de la Vallière was receiving the honors due to the Queen alone, an obscure writer, Besogne, but whose opinions for that very reason are worth taking into account, because they reflect the views of the ordinary man, thus addresses the King in the preface of a book (" *L'Estat de la France,*" 1663, 2 vols.), in which he describes the offices and charges of the court: " Sire, when I contemplate your Majesty in the midst of all the great offices of your Crown and your royal household, . . . I think I am witnessing the assembly of all the gods of antiquity on Mount Olympus, which the poet Homer so often describes to us. I consider you Jupiter, father of gods and king of men." After

much more in the same strain, he concludes as follows: "We may say of your Majesty that having the soul of Caesar and the fortune of Alexander, you possess the appearance and the youth of Achilles." (Hugon: "Social France in the XVIIth Century," pp. 31–32.)

Repellent as such flattery must have been to men with any sense of dignity or self-respect, it was not uncommon. In words it may not always have been so offensive. But by slow degrees Louis became an idol at whose shrine almost everyone bowed. About the middle years of his reign, even after his conversion, in 1683, a look from the prince singled a man out and made his fortune, a word from him was a real honor and a favor bestowed covered the recipient with glory. The satellites of the court regulated their movements on those of the royal planet around which they circled. They readily imitated him in his scandals and vices. When the King loyally and penitently came back to his duty, they had not the heart to follow him in his genuine and sincere conversion. But outwardly they followed their cue and hypocritically mimicked his religious practises and exercises of piety. One of the punishments of Louis was that his conversion wrought almost as much harm as his scandals. With the courtiers, flattery and hypocrisy went

hand in hand. Objectively at least, if not in intention, divine honors were paid to him. In 1686 M. De la Feuillade set up at his own expense in the Place des Victoires at Paris, a bronze equestrian statue of *Louis le Grand,* and by his will ordered that lanterns should be kept burning around it day and night. La Bruyère has told us how even in the royal chapel at Versailles, the courtiers turned their backs on the priest at the altar and the sacred mysteries he was celebrating, and lifted their faces to the King, who might be seen kneeling in the gallery, and on whom their minds and thoughts seemed to be centered, the assembly seeming " to worship the Prince, while the Prince worshiped God."

France and Louis were to realize too late the disasters caused by this unmanly servility. It degraded the old French nobility. The lure of Versailles and Marly dragged its members away from their châteaux and from the soil of which, in spite of many blunders, and of occasional cruelty and harshness to their tenants, the noble families had been the natural protectors. The nobility had rendered splendid services to France. The country realized it. It looked up to its feudal lords as its best representatives. From their ranks it had chosen its statesmen and fighters, its leaders in peace and war. The latter had retained with

some of the vices of feudalism many of its better characteristics. They were a rugged, hearty and virile stock. They lived, hunted, feasted and fought, loved and married and died among their own people. They were aristocrats to their finger tips, but a genuinely democratic spirit tempered their pride of birth and made them as a rule loved and respected by their people. The people knew them. The château of the noble still flung its protecting shadow over the hut of the peasant.

Under Louis the nobles flocked to court; to make a brave show there, they sold their farms, lands, woods and mills. They ground from tenant and farmer the last farthing of rent for the laces, diamonds and costly equipages needed at court. They dangled their heels in idleness in the salons of the sovereign. Their provinces, deprived of their natural leaders, were given over to profiteers and usurers and knew them no more, or only to hate them. The nobility, except in a few striking exceptions and in the remote provinces, lost hold of the affections of its natural followers and friends. The extravagant display of its most prominent families at the court ruined them. The splendors of Versailles were to a large extent responsible for the storm of hate which burst over the towers and châteaux of the nobles in the tragic days of the Revolution.

Chapter VIII

ALL THE KING'S HORSES

OUTWARDLY to the undiscerning eye that was a splendid life at Versailles and Marly when Bourdaloue came to court from the Professed House of his Order in the year of grace 1670. Had he not been prepared for it he would have been mightily shocked. But a Jesuit is supposed to be plastic and elastic in manners and moods, adaptable to the needs and demands of the hour. Plastic to some extent he was. Yet he was never carried away by the splendor which everywhere met his eyes. The age of Louis XIV and that of his father, Louis XIII, was an age of memoirs and journals, of diarists and letter-writers. From Madame de Sévigné and Madame de Motteville before her to Saint-Simon, from Cardinal de Retz and Madame de Longueville to Dangeau and Madame de Caylus, from marquis to *valet de chambre,* everybody jotted down in some form or other, what was going on at court.

If we hear from Madame de Sévigné or the *Mercure,* or Dangeau, about Bourdaloue, it is

always about the priest and the apostle. Of the courtier, not a word. No higher praise could be paid to his memory than this golden silence. In fact Bourdaloue was not a courtier in any sense. His duty called him to Versailles and the royal residences. He went there on his apostolic mission. That finished, he went back to the silence of his religious home over by Saint Sulpice, or at most spent a few days at Bâville in the family of that model judge and Christian gentlemen, his friend, Guillaume de Lamoignon.

Not a breath of scandal is uttered against him by the gossips of the day. Yet we know from Dangeau's "*Journal,*" as well as from the pages of the *Gazette* and the *Mercure,* from the "*Mémoires*" of the Marquis de Sourches, and perhaps best of all from the letters of Madame de Sévigné, that the steps and movements of Father Bourdaloue were, not exactly spied upon, but that they were carefully noted down. We follow the preacher in his labors. We see him, where, perhaps, he reveals himself still better, in his well-deserved hours of recreation and ease. The letters of Madame de Sévigné afford more than one proof of her admiration of the *Grand Pan,* as she called the Jesuit. On the charm and fascination of these letters, there is but one favorable verdict, although their very *négligé* is studied and their un-

adorned simplicity leaves some suspicion that it was the result of no little labor. Fundamentally virtuous, pious even as the term commonly goes, the Marquise had a strong faith, and a real feeling for religion. It was almost impossible that the granddaughter of St. Jeanne Françoise Frémiot de Chantal should not inherit some of the virtues of her illustrious ancestress. But the world had its charms for her. She was not averse to some of its levities. Those that knew her genuine piety, were not a little surprised when they saw her thrusting forward her daughter, that beautiful but rather selfish Pauline whom she idolized, to the dangers of a court where the names of Madame de Montespan and the Duchesse de la Vallière had become a byword and should have been a warning.

But the Marquise had good literary tastes, sound judgment and in her soul was genuinely Catholic. She sincerely admired the eminent qualities of the Jesuit. With the rarest exceptions she expressed that admiration to the end of her life. It may be said that in this she voiced the common opinion of even the more worldly of the court. From some of her letters it might be supposed that Bourdaloue not infrequently visited her salon in the Hôtel Carnavalet. But it is not likely. The Jansenistic views of the marchioness, the light tone of her salon, the rather caustic wit and biting tongues of

its *habitués*, had put the Jesuits of the capital on their guard against the great lady of the house. Yet they were not too rigoristic or Puritanical. Fathers Bouhours and Rapin, and Bourdaloue himself, were entertained at Bâville by the Lamoignons, where they met her. The marquise seems even to go out of her way to say how she relished the company and the conversation of the illustrious guest.

Of Bourdaloue's relations with the hollow and painted idols of the King and his flatterers, we know but one thing. They were few and brief and prompted only by the interests of their souls and the priestly desire to put an end to the scandal of their lives. Angélique de Fontanges he attended on her death-bed and was the witness to the sincerity of her conversion. Mademoiselle de la Vallière he encouraged to leave the King and the court. He had the happiness of seeing her at last in the austere and safe shelter of the daughters of St. Teresa. With Madame de Montespan he had little, if anything, to do. But even she, after years of scandals, scarcely with a parallel in the annals of a Christian court, made atonement for the pride and degradation of her days of sinful and selfish triumphs. The seed sown by Bourdaloue was bearing fruit at last in that cold heart.

Seldom had a preacher more difficult a task than

that which fell to Bourdaloue when he came to court in 1670. Difficult as the task was, however, it presented a wide field for his zeal. At Versailles and Marly and the Tuileries, the world, the Devil and his pomps reigned supreme. Louis never liked Paris. The memories of the Fronde and of the Battle of the Porte St. Antoine were never forgotten. After 1671 he seldom visited the capital. So to Versailles, the little hunting lodge of his father, Louis XIII, he gave all his care and attention. His architect, Le Vau, and his landscape gardener, Le Nôtre, remodeled it, at first on a modest scale, which allowed much of the natural beauty to remain. The park set out by Le Nôtre charmed his Majesty. He delighted in the wide and regular avenues where he could trot his white horses as he rode in his red and gilded coach; the walks that curved in trained mazes among the groves and the gaudy flower-beds; the glimpse of a statue, especially his own, at the end of a clump of trees; splashing fountains and murmuring runlets of crystal streams. But as the court increased in numbers and the King's pride grew with repeated victories and triumphs, Versailles had again to be enlarged and beautified.

For the third time, in 1682, the palace and the gardens underwent a change, more resplendent and more costly. This time Mansard was the architect.

By the end of August, 1684, 20,000 men and 6,000 horses were toiling at the monumental pile. The following year, 36,000 laborers were working for the King's pleasure-house. If Louis had heeded the warning, he might have heard in the blows of the pick and the axe of the builders and toilers the ominous rumble of ruin and destruction, which not a hundred years after was to overthrow the French monarchy. Then were finished or built the magnificent *Galerie des Glaces,* in which not so long ago, Mr. Wilson, M. Georges Clemenceau and Mr. Lloyd George signed a more momentous treaty than any of those of the *Grand Monarque* himself; the splendid north and south wing; the *Orangerie;* the *Grand Trianon.* The chapel was not finished until 1709. By that time Louis had already lost some of his enthusiasm for Versailles. Marly now engaged his attention. (Boulenger: "The Seventeenth Century," p. 197, f.)

The splendors of the first palace were repeated here. Extravagance ran riot. Marshes were drained, canals dug, entire forests transplanted. Marly cost the King and the country 13,200,000 livres spent in the course of thirty-seven years. Here Le Brun rivaled the work of Le Vau and Le Nôtre at Versailles. Pavilions, statues, frescoed colonnades, marble courts and wide-sweeping

stairways, vistaed-bowers, terraces, lakes and canals everywhere met and entranced the eye. Here almost every alley had its culmination in some statue of the monarch, every hall and gallery saw his figure or arms, or exploits in bronze or gold or glittering canvas. Louis was the center of all that glory and glamour. He was the presiding genius of these enchanted gardens, the hero of these Arabian Nights of feasting, of song and splendor. This was the setting in which in 1663 and 1664 took place the *Impromptu* of Versailles and the " Delights of the Enchanted Isle " and the *Fêtes de l'Amour et de Bacchus*. Here they danced and played and gambled and held their *media-noches* to the sound of the viol and the harp. Here the nobility was enslaved and ruined by its own lavish splendor, while peasants in the heart of France were dying of hunger.

Never had a moralist, priest or philosopher a finer opportunity for the study of life than Bourdaloue. He used it masterfully. He beheld Louis crowned with glory. He saw him at the beginning of the disasters of his last years. Fouquet, the great Minister, appeared to him at the height of power. A short time after, Fouquet was without a friend. If Bourdaloue the priest was saddened by the scandals given by the Duchess de la Vallière, he was consoled by the conversion and the repent-

ance of Soeur Marie de la Miséricorde. The court had its Montespans, it also had its Maintenon. Great vices degraded it, it was not without its resplendent virtues. In many hearts the flowers of virtue had sadly decayed. Only in the hearts of a few were the roots of faith entirely dead.

In the Prince himself, they had never entirely been stifled. Louis respected religion, its mysteries and its ministers. In spite of his Gallicanism and his differences with the court of Rome, all the result of his absolutist tendencies and that worship of the State with which he identified himself, he prided himself on being a Catholic king. The diarists, preachers, and memoir writers of the times, among the latter Saint-Simon (Lauras. "*Bourdaloue. Sa Vie et Ses Oeuvres,*" Vol. I, p. 234), are unanimous in their testimony to the loyalty of Louis to the Faith of his fathers. For many years his passions kept him away from the Sacraments which he could not receive unless he made a serious resolve to break the bonds that enslaved him. He was man and Christian enough even then, not to make a sacrilegious mockery of sacred rites to which, in spite of the calumnies of their enemies, his Jesuit confessors, Fathers Annat, Ferrières, Tissier, and that La Chaise whom Landor has so cruelly slandered, would not admit him, king though he was, until he promised amendment.

Louis never missed Mass, hearing one every day, with a display, it is true, of etiquette and theatrical pomp that shocks us, but with unmistakable faith and reverence. When in good health, he kept the Church's laws of fast and abstinence and insisted that the court should do the same. He was an assiduous attendant at sermons and devotions. To the former he listened with evident interest and good-will. Bourdaloue was not afraid in his presence to repeat some of his instructions. The King said that he liked these "second editions" of the Jesuit better than the new sermons of other speakers. The court preachers had full liberty in his presence to attack the prevailing sins. In the portraits of the sinner and his vices which they sometimes drew, Bourdaloue doing so more than once, and with startling boldness, the King recognized his own, yet he was never known to show undue resentment or to attempt to gag their lips.

When, thanks to the influence of Bourdaloue and that of Madame de Maintenon, Louis had returned to his duties, he went to Communion regularly five times each year. In Holy Week, in order to fulfil the law of the Church, he communicated in his parish church and from the hands of the parish priest; at other times, he accomplished this duty in the palace chapel, at Pentecost, on Christ-

mas Eve and the eve of All Saints, and on Our Lady's Assumption. During Mass, he recited his beads. Saint-Simon adds maliciously: "*Il n'en savait pas davantage.*" Louis had faith. If it had not been for this, he would have been a dismal failure.

Chapter IX

"LOQUEBAR DE TESTIMONIIS TUIS IN CONSPECTU REGUM"

WE have so far studied Bourdaloue from the outside, briefly reviewed the uneventful years of preparation for the work before him, examined the stage and the surroundings in which he was to move. What was his outfit for his task, what were the elements and the characteristics of his eloquence?

If sound sense, good judgment, correct taste, a comprehensive view of the subject, a thorough grasp of its parts, keen logical powers, exhaustless invention, orderly disposition, knowledge of the human heart, clear, forcible, popular expression, equilibrium of the mental faculties, go to make the great orator and the consummate writer, then must Louis Bourdaloue ever deserve our admiration, and rank high on the roll of those who have used the spoken word to teach, to convince, to persuade, to uplift their fellows. But we must not exaggerate nor claim too much for our author. He had his shortcomings and defects. Bourdaloue does not,

like some of the great masters, like Demosthenes, St. John Chrysostom, Chatham, or like his wonderful countryman Bossuet, wield the thunderbolt. Seldom does there leap from his heart that electric flash, seldom sound from his lips those trumpet calls which set the blood tingling through the veins and tell us we are listening not to an orator, but to a seer, a prophet, an uncrowned king. He has not the fire, the passion, the rush, the lyric audacities, the irresistible momentum of the Bishop of Meaux. He is not the poet Bossuet is in that " epic " of the pulpit, the Funeral Oration of the Prince de Condé. Bourdaloue does not excel in imaginative power, in sensibility, pathos, or emotion. Color is not altogether absent, but it is too often like a stray sunbeam flashing from a cold gray sky on a steel sword-hilt. There is even now and then a suppressed emotion, a tender pathos and grace which tell us that he does not deserve to be called, without reserve, the " cold " Bourdaloue. Witness this passage about Our Lady:

> I have said that the grace received by Mary in her Immaculate Conception, while it sanctified her person, became at the same time in her an unfailing source of merits to consecrate and ennoble all the actions of her life. This reflection is not less worthy

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of your attention; for according to the laws and principles of theology, it is true to say that the Mother of God, during the whole course of her life, did not perform a single action, which did not derive all its merit and value from this first grace. . . .

To make you better understand what I wish to say, let me put it before you in this comparison. Picture to yourselves, my dear Brethren, that little grain of mustard seed of the Gospel, which cast into the ground, grows little by little until it becomes a mighty tree. No better example could be given to express my thought. As soon as the grain of mustard seed has taken root, it sprouts, it lifts its head from the ground; as it rises, it puts forth branches, it is clothed with leaves, it is adorned with blossoms, it bears fruit. But it is from that seed that all this subsists and lives; it is from that root and seed that the topmost branches of the tree draw the sap which nourishes them; and that sap coursing through every part preserves the leaves fresh and fair, imparts to the blossoms their beauty, gives to the fruits their taste and their flavor. Behold a faint image and figure of the grace which Mary received in her Immaculate Concep-

> tion. That grace was like some heavenly seed germinating within her heart and whose influence and efficacy afterwards informed and vitalized her every act! (Sermon, "The Immaculate Conception," Pt. II, Vol. III, p. 159.)

Who does not feel, on reading these simple but beautiful words, the heart of the priest throbbing with love for his Mother and Queen?

In another paragraph the orator vividly describes the solemnities of Corpus Christi:

> Now Christ needed a grander triumph. Once a year at least a time was to be set apart when He should openly manifest Himself, give Himself, so to speak, as a spectacle to the whole Christian world. "Arise, O Lord, . . . Thou and the Ark which Thou hast sanctified." (Ps. CXXXI, 8.) And that Ark is Thine Adorable Body. Leave, leave the darkness where Thou hast been a self-constituted prisoner in our tabernacles and show Thy glory. Of old Thou didst draw after Thee thousands who followed and blessed Thee. What Thou didst then in the days of Thy suffering and mortal life, becomes Thee far better in that life of bliss and

immortality which Thou dost now enjoy. And you, daughters of Sion, go forth to meet the Heavenly Bridegroom. (Cantic. III, 2.) Nation privileged among nations, faithful and zealous Catholics, draw near, come and share in this hallowed and glorious solemnity. Come and see, not King Solomon crowned with the diadem, but the King of Kings, but the Lord God of the universe crowned with splendor and glory. . . .

From all sides they gather to the spot appointed for the solemn pageant; the ranks are ordered, each takes his place; a countless throng, nay rather, a numerous court is formed of all ranks and conditions and classes of men, from the humblest and the poorest, to the lord and prince, to the very King himself. At the sight of the Divinity present in their midst, titles and dignities disappear, and each one has but a single thought, to outstrip his brother in fervent acts of homage and love. "I saw the Lord," said the Prophet, "sitting upon a throne high and elevated. . . . Upon it stood the Seraphim. . . . And they cried one to another: Holy, Holy, Holy, the Lord God of hosts, all the earth is full of

His glory." (Is. VI, 1–3.) And our priests, like those Angels, who in heaven watch around the throne of God and before the Majesty of the Most-High, approach His sanctuary to fulfil their holy office.

Our streets are carpeted with flowers, the houses decorated, altars erected at intervals, to welcome the Sovereign Lord, and in a way, to serve Him as a resting place. At last the signal is given. The God of Majesty leaves His temple and begins His triumphal march. He is in the midst of His ministers as High-Priest and Supreme Pontiff, under the canopy which shelters Him as King of heaven and earth. In His honor the incense burns. He receives it as the Son of God, nay, as God Himself. The clash of arms is heard to do honor to the Ruler, to the Conqueror of the world. What voices lifted up to celebrate and exalt His name! What canticles of praise! What harmonious concerts! What acclamations! What fervent acts of adoring love! All bow and sink to the ground before His face. And I might well apply to Him the grand, mysterious words of the Prophet: " He hath set His tabernacle in the sun: and he is as a bridegroom coming

> out of his bride chamber, hath rejoiced as a giant to run the way. His going out is from the end of heaven, and His circuit even to the end thereof: and there is no one that can hide himself from His heat." (Ps. XVIII, 6, 7.) (Cf. Sermon: " Christ Triumphant in the Eucharist." Vol. II, p. 560.)

On reading such passages we feel a genuine warmth and are conscious of a real emotion in the speaker, but repressed, and for that reason impressive and manly. Fénelon was one of the first to say of Bourdaloue that he did not appeal to the heart. It is not quite sure, first of all, that in the passage of the " Dialogues on Eloquence," referred to, Fénelon had Bourdaloue in view. If taken too literally, the remarks of the Archbishop would give us an altogether false impression of the Jesuit master. Facts will ever be better than mere statements. One more example will show that Bourdaloue is not so devoid of feeling as he has at times been pictured, that he has unction and pathos. The passage is a plea for the suffering souls in Purgatory.

> For, what would your feelings be, if at this very moment God should bid these suffering souls appear before you, and you were to

witness their torments? Suppose you heard their sobs, their wailings and their groans, and from the depths of their prison-house, this heart-rending appeal should reach your ears: " Have pity on me, have pity on me! " You, my dear friend, you so tender-hearted and merciful, you, who, without shuddering, could not see a criminal executed, could you behold, without pitying them, so many holy souls in that sad state to which they are reduced? You are anxious to find out who those souls are; surely you know them well. Draw near, I beg you, look at them, recognize them. There is the soul of your father, whose wealth you now enjoy, of that father who spent himself for you, to whom you owe all that you are; he suffers now perhaps because he was too eager and solicitous for your education and advancement, and he expects from your gratitude and love that now at least you should watch over his interests and his welfare with God. Advance a step further; yonder is that friend whose memory should be so dear to you, but whom perhaps you have completely forgotten; now is the time for him to test the sincerity of your friendship; he suffers, you alone can alleviate his pain;

> pray for him, and God will put an end to his torments. In this hour of sorrow and need will you refuse him a help so necessary, and which will cost you so little? (" Sermon for All Souls' Day." Vol. III, pp. 293–294.)

Nor would it be fair to omit the following beautiful passage on Mary Magdalen, which we give as we find it in Charles Butler's " Church of France " :

> Was Magdalen better acquainted with Jesus Christ than we are? On the contrary, the mysteries and doctrines of Christianity, in which we have been instructed, have discovered to us wonders that were hidden from her eyes. Why, therefore, should we make a longer delay? Without going farther, why, before we quit this church, before we stir from this very altar, where Jesus Christ Himself is present, not indeed as a guest, as in the house of the Pharisee, but, as our food and nourishment, as a victim immolated for us, as our priest, as our pastor, why should we not now give ourselves up to Him? Let us, for once, completely do, what we have, so often, proposed to do; let us say to Him, No! O Lord!

> It shall not be in a year's time; at the end of a month; it shall be today. It is wrong for me to temporize. It shall not be, when I have finished this or that business; for it is unjust, that the concerns of the world should make me postpone the concerns of God to them. It shall not be when age comes upon me; for Yours, O God! is every age; and it would be a sensible insult to You, that I should reserve for You, the last years, the refuse of my life. It is *now,* O God! I *am Thine,* and I will be always Thine. Receive the protestation I make to Thee, and strengthen the resolution I form in Thy sight.

Can simplicity, can instruction, can eloquence, Charles Butler asks, go beyond this passage?

We have quoted these passages, lengthy as they may appear, to prove that if our orator does not excel in the emotional and pathetic, he is by no means the stolid, the impassive speaker some would have us believe. We freely admit, however, that while he invariably convinces, he does not always persuade. Sentiment and pathos were not his strong point. With that sound sense which characterized him, he looked to other elements for his success.

These elements are not hard to analyze. On the death of Bourdaloue, Giroust and Cheminais, Father Bretonneau, himself a fairly good preacher, edited their sermons. For this Father de la Rue applied to him the words spoken of St. Martin, who had raised three dead men to life: "*Trium mortuorum suscitator magnificus.*" There is no longer any reasonable doubt as to the authenticity of the sermons of Bourdaloue as given to us by his first editor. The question is admirably discussed in Lauras' "*Bourdaloue. Sa Vie et ses Oeuvres.*" (Vol. I, p. 101 ff.) And critics like d'Aguesseau, Maury, Brunetière, Sainte-Beuve, Feugère, agree with Bretonneau that the beauty of Bourdaloue's sermons does not consist in detached passages, striking and eloquent, skilfully prepared and introduced, but in a rounded whole, a compact body, where prevail the same unity and continuity of impression, the same general excellence of workmanship and tone.

Seldom perhaps do we find anything sudden or dazzling. There are scarcely any of those gusts of passion, those eagle flights which startle the listener with their sublimity. But nowhere in the one hundred and fifty sermons and more which remain to us of the thirty-four years of the Jesuit's public career, is there anything flat or commonplace. This is wonderful, for even Demosthenes

can be dry, Burke heavy, and Webster dull. Bossuet when not buoyed up on the pinions of some mighty theme — and then into what heavenly sunlit spaces he soars! — Bossuet is uneven, irregular, he has waste, rugged spots, like barren fens at the foot of some Alpine crag. Bourdaloue is good, sound, excellent throughout, "*totus, teres atque rotundus.*" His sermons remind us of a Roman legion: not much show or pomp or external glitter, but order, discipline, supreme efficiency. Good blades and stout, with steady hands to thrust them home. Quarter it for years in the heart of a hostile country, and though hemmed in on all sides by the foe, it will give a good account of itself.

Any one of the sermons may profitably be studied. Each and every one is excellent. Some of course derive from their subject a power which raises them above the level of the rest. The one on the Passion, for instance, in which the orator proves that Christ Crucified is the wisdom of God and the power of God, has been called the masterpiece of the Christian pulpit. It is nobly conceived. In its first part especially, it has a triumphant ring, an intensity and momentum, a compelling force seldom to be met with outside of Bossuet and the Fathers. That sermon should be preached once a year in every Catholic pulpit in the world. It would make

men wiser with the sacred folly of the Cross; it would make their cold hearts throb with an exultant pride for its hallowed ignominies and shame. Its exordium has the sweep of an organ-dirge intoning the funeral oration of the Son of God.

> If there is any one subject which is calculated to bring shame and sorrow to the heart of the preacher, as he finds himself compelled by the binding rules of his sacred ministry to make it his theme, surely it is the all-engrossing, awful subject of the Saviour's Crucifixion. For he must publish to the world at large the amazing humiliations of a God, the outrages which he endured, the weakness which well-nigh overpowered Him, His Weariness, His Passion, His Death. And yet, says St. Paul, in spite of all the ignominy of the Cross, I am not ashamed of the Gospel of my Saviour; for that Gospel is the power of God unto salvation for all who are illuminated by the light of faith (Rom. I, 16). More than this, St. Paul glories in the story of the Cross. God forbid, he tells the Galatians, that I should glory, save in the Cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ (Gal. VI, 14). Yes, there is in the whole course of the Gospel narrative

nothing grander, more marvelous, or better calculated to satisfy the minds of reasonable and sensible men, than this profound and adorable mystery. For that is the literal meaning of the truly Divine passage I have chosen for my text: " The Jews require signs and the Gentiles seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ Crucified, the power of God and the wisdom of God." (I Cor. I, 22–24.)

The unbelieving Jews demand miracles. The vain and self-sufficient Greeks pique themselves on their search for wisdom. Both the one and the other obstinately refuse to believe in Jesus Christ, unless the conditions on which each insists be granted. But I, says the Apostle to confound at once the incredulity of the Jew and the pride of the Greek, I content myself with preaching to them Christ Crucified.

And why this assertion? Because therein lies the supreme miracle of the power of God and at the same time the masterpiece of His Divine wisdom. Miracle of the power of God, which of itself and standing alone should take the place of every other miracle demanded and expected by the Jews: Christ Crucified, the power of God!

> Masterpiece of God's wisdom, which alone is more than sufficient to bring the Gentiles under the yoke of faith and to make them renounce all their worldly wisdom: Christ Crucified, the wisdom of God!

It is evident from these nobly confident words, that Bourdaloue, like St. Paul, gloried in the ignominies of the Cross. He was acquainted with the warning given to the orator: *" Fide tibi et causae! "* He could trust his genius, for it had mastered the theme. The latter he presents to his hearers with keen-cut edge:

> It is my purpose, in this discourse, to prove to you that the great mystery of Our Saviour's Death upon the Cross is not to be regarded only as the mystery of His humility and weakness, but as the mystery in which He displayed in its fullest all His Divine power. In the second place, I am going to show you that the mystery which the world has hitherto regarded only as foolishness, is in truth the mystery in which God manifested His wisdom most openly. Give me, O my God, the power to accomplish this; and at the same time give to those who listen to me that docility with which Thy Word should be received, that they

may not only be persuaded but converted and sanctified.

That a God, being God, should act as Master and Sovereign, that He should have created heaven and earth by a word, that He should work marvels throughout the universe and that nothing should be able to resist His power, is a thing so natural for Him that it is scarcely for us a subject of astonishment. But that a God should suffer; that a God should die in agony; that a God, as Scripture says, should taste death, He who alone possesses immortality; that is what neither angels nor men will ever be able to comprehend. I may then well exclaim with the Prophet: " Be astonished, O ye heavens " (Jer. II), for this is what surpasses all that we can imagine, all that our mental vision can grasp, this demands all the submission and all the obedience of our faith. It is in this great mystery that our faith has triumphed over the world: " This is the victory which overcometh the world, our faith " (I John, V, 4).

Yes, it is true that Jesus Christ suffered and died. But yet, in speaking to you of those sufferings and of that death, I do not hesitate to advance a proposition which you

would treat as a paradox if the words of my text had not disposed you to listen to it with respect. I assert that Jesus Christ suffered and died as God; that is to say, in such a manner as could belong only to a God, in a manner so suitable, so becoming to God that St. Paul, giving no other reason, believed himself to be justified in declaring to both Jews and Gentiles: This Crucified One whom we preach to you, this man whose Death scandalizes you, this Christ who on Calvary appears to you to be crushed by the hand of God and reduced to the last extremity of weakness, this suffering, dying Saviour is in truth the very power of God. What you despise in Him is the cause of our veneration for Him. He is our God, and we want no other sign, no other proof of this than His Cross. That is the epitome of St. Paul's theology, which perhaps you have never yet thoroughly comprehended and which I am going to unfold to you.

This is something far nobler than what men usually call " preaching." It is eloquence reduced to its purest form. It is a noble thought crystallized to simplicity and power. Such sincerity

of accent Cicero did not always attain, and even Demosthenes might have envied. In firmer, more triumphant tones, Bourdaloue continues:

> I say that Jesus Christ died in a manner which could only belong to One who was perfect God as well as perfect Man. A very simple statement of things as they are will convince you of this. A Man who dies after having Himself predicted clearly and explicitly all the circumstances of His death; a Man who dies in the very act of working miracles, and the greatest miracles, proving that there is nothing but what is supernatural and Divine in His Death; a Man whose death carefully considered is itself the greatest of all miracles, since, far from dying from weakness like other men, He dies, on the contrary, by an effort of His almighty power; and, what transcends all else, a Man who by the infamy of His death attains to the highest pinnacle of glory, and who, expiring upon the Cross, triumphs, by means of that very Cross, over the prince of this world, conquers by that Cross the pride of the world, raises His Cross upon the ruins of the idolatry and the infidelity of the world — is not this

> a Man who dies as a God, or rather (if you will) as the God-Man? And those are the grounds of the Apostle's assertion that this Man who died upon the Cross was not merely the minister of the power of God, but the very power of God Incarnate: Christ Crucified, the power of God. (O'Mahony, " Great French Sermons." First Series.)

The sermon on the Resurrection, in which the Risen Christ is proved to be the foundation of our faith and our hope, is cast in the same mold. The text is: *" Surrexit! non est hic ":* " He is risen! He is not here." The exordium is as follows:

> These words are very different from those that we are accustomed to see engraved on the tombstones of men. However great the men over whom we have raised them may have been, however superb these mausoleums erected by human vanity, however elaborate the phraseology of their eulogistic epitaphs, all is summed up in the two brief words: " Here lies." This man, so renowned in the world, perhaps a great conqueror, so powerful, so much honored and exalted, lies here beneath this stone, down in the dust, buried there,

hidden from our eyes; and all his power, all his greatness, cannot raise him from this lowly resting-place.

But how different with regard to Our Divine Lord! Scarcely has earth received Him into her bosom when, on the third day, victorious and dazzling with light, He leaves it; so that the holy women who come to the sepulchre eager and sorrowful, seeking Him and not finding Him, and passionately demanding some tidings of Him, learn nothing except that He is risen, that He is not there. This, according to the prophecy of Isaias, is what makes His grave glorious: "His sepulchre shall be glorious." Whilst the glory of the great ones of this world ends in the tomb, it is in the tomb that the glory of this God Incarnate begins. It is there, where weakness reaches its very culminating point, that He displays the perfection of His strength, and even in the very arms of death resumes by His own virtue a blessed and immortal life. What a glorious change! A change which was to strengthen His Church, console and reassure His disciples, and serve as a ground of Christian faith and hope; for such are the effects of Our Saviour's Resurrection.

Yes, I repeat that one of the most solid foundations of our faith and hope is the glorious Resurrection of Jesus Christ. In saying this I am only following the teaching of St. Augustine, who in a few words puts the great truth before us; he says: In this Resurrection we have a miracle and an example. A great miracle to confirm our faith; a miracle, that we may believe. A great example to strengthen our hope; an example, that we may hope. Indeed, it is upon this Resurrection of the Saviour of men that the two most important truths of Christianity are based. One of these is, so to speak, the very foundation of all religion, namely, that Jesus Christ is God; and the other is the corner-stone of the whole morality of the Gospel, namely, that we ourselves shall one day rise again as did Jesus Christ. That is what I want to make clear to you — the miracle of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ as the incontrovertible proof of His Divinity, by means of which He confirms our faith; and the example of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ as the assured pledge and token of our own future resurrection, by means of which He strengthens our hope. (O'Mahony, *op. cit.*)

Splendid also the sermons on the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady, on hell; the panegyrics of St. Francis Xavier and St. Andrew. Grave and solemn, like the sound of a great cathedral bell, are the sermons on death. This idea of death is developed by Bourdaloue in three sermons: 1. "The Fear of Death"; 2. "Preparation for Death"; 3. "The Thought of Death." As Brunetière says ("*Etudes Critiques.*" p. 157), these three sermons form a perfect trilogy. But no matter how plain or homely the subject, how unpromising and jejune it may at first appear, as for instance "Almsgiving," "The Care of Domestics," the same excellence is everywhere manifest. If that uniform excellence never degenerates into dull monotony, it is for the reason that the theme, thoroughly grasped in itself, is always meant for his audience, for their varying conditions and needs. Bourdaloue always meets his hearers on their own level; he is ever eminently practical.

Chapter X

THE HERALD APPEALS TO ME

IN the sermons, as we analyze them now, one peculiarity strikes us forcibly. The herald makes a personal appeal to me. The orator does not seem to be preaching to a vast throng, but to be talking to me, to be teaching me. Bourdaloue does not attempt to be eloquent, he wants evidently to do good to me, he wants me to see clearly and to understand the principles of reason and faith which must guide my life. He hopes to make me realize how far my conduct has been in contradiction with the faith and the religion I profess. To that he sacrifices almost everything. He has indeed other powers in reserve, he is content to let us barely guess but not feel their entire strength. So it is to our reason he mainly appeals, not to the imagination. He is ever calm, sober, self-controlled; he seldom gives full bridle to his passions and emotions. No speaker rants less than Bourdaloue. He abhors maudlin sentimentality. Even when the subject calls for the pathetic, he deliberately warns his hearers that he does not intend to wield

that weapon against them. By some honorable scruple he does not wish to catch them off their guard or to act unfairly towards them. Here are his own words in one of his Passion sermons:

> For it is not now the time to weep over the death of the Man-God. If we have any tears to shed, they must be kept for another purpose, and what that purpose is, we know too well, since Christ Himself has so authoritatively and clearly taught us, when on His way to Calvary He said to the daughters of Jerusalem: "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not over Me, but weep for yourselves and your children" (St. Luke XXIII, 28). No, no, believe me, it is not now the time to weep over His death. We must make it the subject of our earnest thought and meditation; we must try to fathom its mystery, we must try to find in its humiliations, the plan, the design, the masterpiece of a God, try to see our faith resting on it as its secure foundation and its strongest proof. With God's holy grace, this is my task today. Others have again and again stirred and softened your hearts by the mournful story of the Sacred Passion of Our Lord; as for me I only wish

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> to instruct you. The eloquent, the pathetic words you have heard, have often, it is true, stirred your feelings, but perhaps after all with a barren compassion, or at most with a fleeting compunction, gone as soon as felt, and which effected no change in your lives. My intention is to convince your reason, to offer you something more substantial and solid, something to be as a foundation for all the sentiments of piety and love which this great mystery can inspire. (Sermon: "The Passion." Exordium. Vol. I, p. 576.)

Here then, in his own words, we have the orator's platform. We may regret perhaps that he does not more often wield other weapons, but it must be admitted that he is almost without a peer in the use of the one he has selected. When this great teacher faces his audience, when he lays down principle after principle, and ever calm, master of himself and of his facts, proceeds step by step to the goal he has clearly seen and marked, when he wraps his hearers round and round, fold on fold, with the steel band of truths, which the victims cannot bend or break, he has a logic, a force, a fire, a dramatic intensity seldom surpassed in the annals of eloquence. He reminds us of the demi-god of fable who crushed the writhing

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Antaeus in his arms. *"Quasi Herculem oratorem senties!"*

It will be natural for many to institute a comparison between Bourdaloue and Edmund Burke. We think that Burke would have sat spellbound at the feet of the French preacher and would have thoroughly understood and enjoyed him. Bourdaloue certainly did not command the imperial diction, the oriental fancy and the imagery, the swing and roll of the sentence of the Irish statesman. In dialectical skill, however, in comprehensive grasp of the subject, in lucid order and disposition, in the art of marshaling facts, they are much alike. But the orator of "Conciliation" and "The East India Bill" sometimes lost himself in his subject. "He went on refining," thinking he could bring his audience up to his own lofty height. And we know that Erskine, admirer though he was of Burke, tried to escape from the House by crawling under the benches in most unparliamentary fashion, so as not to hear a speech which some time after he sat up a whole night to read. But Bourdaloue comes down to his audience. He speaks for it, he never forgets, as too many preachers forget, that those men and women came to hear, to understand and follow him. Those men and women with their virtues and vices, their social position, their prejudices, their rank, are for him a concrete, living

fact, and he deals with it as such. To illustrate this practical side of our preacher, it is sufficient to read these few lines. They are from a sermon on the "Duties of Parents." The orator warns his hearers that their children have definite rights which neither father nor mother may take away:

> In the management of your households, always respect the rights of God, and never infringe on those of your children. Leave them that same freedom which you wished yourselves and of which perhaps you have been so jealous. Do for them what you wished had been done for you, and if in this you have ever been wronged, do not retaliate on those who are in no way responsible, and who besides ought to be so dear to you. Forget not their eternal salvation which is here at stake, and be not so heartless as to sacrifice it to your worldly views. Do not incur the risk of one day becoming the object of their maledictions and curses after having been the cause of their misfortune and woe. If you cannot leave them a rich heritage, and if they may not boast of extensive wealth and estates, do not deprive them, if I may use the expression, of the sacred right of self-

> ownership. God does not oblige you to make them rich; He commands you to leave them free. (Sermon: "Duties of Parents." Vol. II, p. 9.)

And this from a Jesuit, and in the seventeenth century! It rings modern enough. True, because it is the teaching of that Gospel, which ever meets, in the file of ages, the needs of humanity. In that same sermon there is another passage which shows Bourdaloue at his best. It is directed against an abuse scarcely known in our days, but not infrequent in those of Louis XIV. If in a family a daughter could not be married to the satisfaction of the parents, or could not be settled comfortably or becomingly in the world, the unfortunate girl was driven without vocation into what for her must be the dreary solitude and captivity of religious life. The Church, ever the watchful guardian of her children's rights, again and again lifted her voice against the shameful abuse. In spite of her warnings it was not always easy to check it. Bourdaloue denounced it with apostolic boldness and his words vibrate with scorn and indignation:

> To settle that daughter in the world would cost you a great deal. Is this alone a sufficient motive to condemn her to the reli-

gious state? No, she is not called to that kind of life! "Well she must be," you reply, "since there is no alternative before her!" "But, I tell you, God does not want her in religion." "We must take it for granted," you answer, "that He does, and act as if He wanted her there!" "But she has not the least sign of a vocation!" "Yes, she has an evident sign," you say, "her actual condition, the straits in which she is." "But she tells you herself, she does not feel any attraction for the religious life." "That grace," you tell me, "will come by and by, and when she will be in the proper place to receive it."

And then you lead the victim to the altar, bound hand and foot, and in what dispositions? Her will forced and constrained, her lips sealed through fear and respect for a parent, whom she has always honored and loved. In the midst of a ceremony, dazzling no doubt for the throng of spectators, but a mournful tragedy for the chief figure, she is presented to the priest, she becomes a victim and a sacrifice, which, far from glorifying or pleasing God, becomes odious, execrable in His sight and provokes His vengeance.

This was plain speaking. The hypocritical mask was thus ruthlessly torn aside by the Jesuit. He could not be accused of holding the truth captive.

Bourdaloue is essentially a practical moralist. Nowhere do the lax principles, attributed by Pascal to the casuists of the Society, to Valentia, to Bauny, to Escobar, find a more telling and a more concrete refutation than in his pages. If now and then a severe, but not unjust condemnation of the leaders of the Jansenistic school falls from the lips of this calm and judicious reasoner, we feel that the stern rebuke was but too well deserved. If the eloquent religious is so practical, where did he get the gift? He knew the broad highways down which human life surged in ceaseless streams. From his quiet cell, observant but unseen, he had watched the tide of humanity, as it eddied around him. He knew man from his books. He knew men from one book, the human heart. That heart he knew thoroughly, as thoroughly as he understood and knew the manners and the men, the aspirations and the emotions of the age in which he lived.

It is that knowledge of the human heart expressed in fitting form, that creates world-literature. In this the age of Bourdaloue followed in the footsteps of the classic periods. If, with rarest exceptions, it did not reach the depth of

insight of those wonderful Greeks, it painted men with a sobriety and accuracy, a surety of touch, a fidelity of detail, a truth and a sanity which certainly recall those models. Bourdaloue in this was essentially of his time, but we feel that, with his broad outlook on humanity, were he living in our days, he would photograph us with the same perfection. This Jesuit of more than two hundred years ago can be very pointed and personal. He knows us, not merely on one side. He has explored every winding twist and turn, the secluded lanes and by-ways of the soul.

Others in his time had studied men, but their methods were different. La Bruyère had given a picture of the age, and if the canvas was not very large, the colors were natural and the features correct. Pascal, better inspired in his " Thoughts " than in the " *Provinciales*," had hewn out of nature's exhaustless quarry, rough but massive blocks of truth, fit corner-stones for the temple he had intended to raise. La Rochefoucauld, in his " Maxims," had reduced everything he had seen on the stage of life to a cold formula: all men are selfish; self-love is the secret, the key to all their seemingly contradictory and irreconcilable acts. No one will maintain that Bourdaloue has the sublimity of Pascal, but his gallery is larger than La Bruyère's, his analysis truer than La Rochefoucauld's.

The Jesuit has no formula to work out and no pet theory to advance. He takes a more correct view of men and life, calmly analyzes man as he finds him in his fallen state, with the conflict of two forces struggling in his breast, with his nature weakened, but not altogether perverted by the fall, with his freedom, his attraction for sensible objects and pleasures, but also with his yearnings and strivings for nobler and better things. Studying king and courtier, fine lord and lady, rich and poor, master or servant, exactly as he sees them before him, he scrutinizes them closely because he loves them; not merely as a cold spectator, but because he feels for them and is in sympathy with their weaknesses, their sorrows and needs. He becomes an adviser and a friend. But he does not mince matters. He knew the labyrinthine ways of the heart, and was philosopher and moralist enough to realize that, varying with circumstances and different in every man,

> . . . One master passion in the breast,
> Like Aaron's serpent, swallows up the rest.

He leveled his guns against the master vices of the age; he " thundered," the word is Madame de Sévigné's, against the scandals of the court and of the King. Even in the formal compliments, addressed to the monarch, he knew how to point

out a lesson, and the careful student who reads them in the light of the history of the times, will find a great deal " where more is meant than meets the ear." War had a fascination for Louis. In his first sermon on the Nativity, Bourdaloue delicately exhorts him to conclude a lasting peace for the welfare of his people. With equal delicacy, good taste and feeling in his sermon on the Last Judgment preached during his first Advent, the orator paints a noble picture of the ideal king whose lips keep justice, a picture meant for the eyes of the prince before him, whose word was everywhere law, but who listened humbly to the teachings of this outspoken priest.

Chapter XI

THE MESSAGE STRIKES HOME

IT is an easy task to summon before us the scene in the Royal Chapel. We catch ourselves surveying that splendid and cultured throng. There perhaps in that row of Bishops is Bossuet. He wants to hear the master once more. On the other side, are two of the preacher's best friends, Chancellor Le Tellier and President Lamoignon. Close by, is the man who can make or mar a reputation with a few rhymes, Boileau, all ears and eyes, now and then nodding vigorous assent as his friend drives a good point home. Further up, not far from his Majesty, Condé, maybe, or Luxembourg, their brows still garlanded with the laurels of victory. Hidden somewhere in the audience are a few Jesuits, like Father Lachaise, the King's confessor, or Fathers de la Rue and Gaillard, themselves preachers to his Majesty. Who is there just behind Condé? It is Louvois, the great War Minster, dark and forbidding. Be quite sure Madame de Sévigné is present. She has come, in her coach, all through

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the muddy streets, first and foremost to hear " the divine Bourdaloue," and she listens with reverent and rapt attention; but she will be able to tell us, in tomorrow's letter, what the Princess de Conti wore and said, and whether the Countess next to her had her prayer-book bound in red or green. Such or very similar at least must have been the scene, when the orator told the King that it would be more difficult perhaps for him, the ruler, to save his soul, than for the humblest of his subjects.

Bourdaloue is in the pulpit. The whole bearing of the man is singularly impressive and priestly. It is natural, dignified, courtly. The gestures are noble and restrained. The voice is clear and full. The orator speaks with intense energy and power and with rapid enunciation, but is completely master of himself, his audience and his theme. From beginning to end he moves right on with the resistless march of a Macedonian phalanx. His contemporaries are unanimous in their praise of his elocution and delivery. That earnest delivery was undoubtedly one of the causes of his long-continued triumphs. Maury, La Harpe and l'Abbé Hurel, misled by the famous passage in Fénelon's " Second Dialogue " about the preacher " whose eyes are constantly shut, whose memory fails him, etc.," have done but scant justice to the

orator. It seems now practically certain that in the dialogue, Fénelon was criticizing, not the eloquent Jesuit, but some clumsy imitator.

Such were the external gifts of Bourdaloue. His words to Louis compelled attention; they were authoritative and solemn:

> A throne in heaven, without ever having enjoyed one on earth! Such is the lot of countless Saints, and that is enough to make them happy forever more! But an earthly throne, and none in heaven! Such is the fate of countless princes and sovereigns, now reprobate, now lost forever, and consequently unhappy for eternity! . . . Holiness in a Christian, is but the common, the ordinary effect of grace; holiness in a person of rank is in a way its masterpiece, but holiness in a king is a marvel, a wonder; and holiness in the greatest, the most powerful of kings will be a portent, a prodigy. (Sermon: "The Reward of the Saints." Vol. I, p. 14.)

When Louis was giving to the world the spectacle of a life better suited to a Turkish sultan than a Catholic king, the relentless moralist, as Madame de Sévigné writes, "hammered like a deaf man," against his shameful conduct, reminding him

of the depths of degradation and spiritual blindness, forerunners of final reprobation, to which these disorders would inevitably lead. Louis, unable then to shake off the gyves which fettered him, could not worthily approach the Sacraments; but, as we have seen, he had too much faith, he was too sincerely religious and too much of a king to attempt a sacrilegious mockery. It was in such circumstances that Bourdaloue spoke the following words. Seldom was a king publicly reprimanded with more decorum, yet with more stinging, lashing words, and this because they are so calm and passionless, not like the words of a preacher from the pulpit, but like the solemn warnings and expostulations of a confessor to a penitent kneeling at his feet. The orator has for his subject the duty, incumbent on every Catholic, of worthily approaching the Holy Table at Easter-time:

> Let no one dare approach that Paschal Table unless signed and sealed with that special mark, that he is a follower of Christ. . . . As for worldlings, for sensual and carnal men, for givers of scandal, for scoffers and unbelievers, they are forbidden to approach it; and if they dared to present themselves, we who are the priests of the

> Most High and the dispensers of His Mysteries, we would not hesitate to exercise the power which the living God has put into our hands, and exclude them from it. Were he the mightiest conqueror of the earth, *sive princeps militiae,* were he the first and greatest monarch in the world, *sive imperator,* we would sound into his ears the commands and the threats of that Sovereign Master whose Banquet Table he would dare to defile. (Sermon: "Paschal Communion." Vol. I, p. 554.)

Ringing echo of that "*Non licet,*" "It is not allowed," which St. John the Baptist before Herod, Ambrose before Theodosius, Gregory before Henry of Germany, Innocent before Philip of France, were not afraid to thunder into the ears of wicked kings. In another passage of the same sermon, the orator, without naming him, takes the King aside, and thus, like a brother, a friend, a priest, reasons, argues, pleads with him:

> My Brother, suppose you present yourself before me in this solemn Paschal time, and that I do not find you sufficiently disposed to receive that grace of reconciliation, without which you may not approach the Holy Table. . . . What must I do then?

Shall I give you that absolution which you beg? If so, I must be false to my sacred office. Shall I not give it, shall I withhold it? Then you will not eat of the Paschal Lamb with the rest of the Faithful, then you must be absent from the Banquet Table of Christ. If I admit you to that Table, I commit a heinous crime and I put the seal of reprobation and damnation on my soul and yours. If I exclude you, you scandalize the whole Church. You see the dilemma, the straits into which you fall. . . .

To sacrifice, out of consideration for your person, the honor of that august Sacrament entrusted to me, that I could never do. I know too well the limits of my power; and the glamour of your wealth, of your rank and dignity could never dazzle me. What will happen then? Just what I tell you. There will be neither Easter duty, nor Communion, nor religious worship for you; everybody will notice you, everybody will talk about you. . . . Your bad example will spread to others; the skeptic and the scoffer will see in it an approval of their conduct, you will be responsible for the abuse they will make of it. (*Ibid.*, p. 566.)

Bourdaloue had the happiness to know that his words bore fruit at last. He saw the King return to his duty and generously persevere. He was no small factor in that long-delayed, yet fundamentally sincere conversion. The Jesuit preacher knew the monarch, the court and the times perfectly well. Human nature does not seem to have had many secrets for this keen anatomist. Bourdaloue analyzes slowly, dispassionately, but with unerring truth and accuracy. The probe and scalpel in his hands never falter or slip. He does not flash truth before us with the lightning-like strokes, the sweep, the rush of the Eagle of Meaux, who suddenly flings the veil aside and lays bare the innermost recesses in the sanctuary of the soul. The diagnosis of the Jesuit is not so brilliant. He proceeds step by step. The spiritual malady is mapped out and charted, its record made as carefully as a physician traces it in a fever case. Its symptoms, its rise, its crisis, its fall, its effects, nothing is wanting. Was the genesis and the progress of skepticism ever better described than in the following words?

> Do not imagine that the state of practical infidelity in which they live, developed all of a sudden, or that they blotted out at one stroke from their mind those general notions and ideas of the existence and provi-

dence of God. That can never be, that never was. For what is the starting point of that excessive freedom, that license of belief they exercise? It is not always easy to tell. Some trifling banter or merry jest about certain popular devotions. That appears in their eyes a very slight thing, and it may be as they believe. But just give that little seed time to grow. After a short while they will not be afraid to criticize and to find fault with doctrines received and approved by the whole Church. This is something more serious. Then they go so far as to find fault with our most august, our holiest ceremonies: greater rashness still. Next they sneer at the Sacraments.

And then the contempt in which they hold them is speedily followed by an interior, a secret rebellion of the heart and soul against the very mysteries of our religion; and here we have a proximate disposition to the total loss of their faith. Finally they come to look upon religion merely as a kind of external police, good and necessary to hold in check the passions of the people: a principle we must reject with scorn and loathing. All this, together with their reflections on the events they wit-

> ness around them, makes them doubt of the existence of a Providence: additional blindness with which God punishes them. Not knowing whether there be a Providence or not, they are not quite sure whether there be a God or not, or whether they possess a spiritual soul, capable of possessing Him. And this is the lowest depth, the last abyss of infidelity, and unbelief. Thy Prophet has said it, O Lord, and his words are true: "The pride of them that hate Thee ascendeth continually." (Ps. LXXIII. 23.) (Sermon: "The Perfect Observance of the Law." Vol. I, p. 397.)

In the same sermon, a little further on, there is a sombre, but faithful picture of the growth of passion and sin in the soul.

Such pictures are not true for the age of Bourdaloue alone. Not a word need be changed were they intended to describe the mental conditions of thousands today. Bourdaloue has one of the characteristics of a great classic: he is true for all time. The sermons on "Spiritual Blindness," "True and False Devotion," "False Conscience," etc., are masterpieces of anatomical dissection. The quivering fibers are laid bare under the knife of the master. The knife cuts unflinchingly; but only to heal.

Chapter XII

THE FORM AND PRESSURE OF THE TIME

IN listening to Bourdaloue, his hearers could, of course, read between the words, and catch certain hints meant for the King himself or Madame de Montespan or the Duchess de la Vallière or M. de Tréville or others. The orator was a remarkable portrait-painter. He copied life. We need not wonder, if now and again, even though he did not write the model's name on his canvas, his audience could supply the deficiency. But it was not his habit and it was against the spirit of his rules, just as much as it was against the dignity of the office entrusted to him and of which he was such a jealous guardian, to indulge in anything like an easily recognized satire or libel of the individuals before him. He did not draw individuals. He did not paint any specified gambler, or libertine, dissolute courtier or haughty, unscrupulous beauty. But he had the Rembrandt touch, the sombre colors of that master. Some of the Jesuit's pictures are as lifelike as the Spanish grandees of

Velasquez, a Sargent portrait, the " Old Woman Paring her Nails " or the " Man in Armor " of the Dutch artist.

He lived in a court seething with intrigues and ambitions. In that court Colbert was large-minded and generous where France and her financial, naval, commercial and colonial interests were concerned. But Colbert never forgot Colbert's interests or Colbert's hates. He plotted and prepared the fall of his rival, Fouquet. The latter, as may be surmised, despised and hated him. Colbert and Louvois were deadly enemies, yet both combined and conspired for the fall of the Foreign Secretary, Pomponne. Pomponne ruined, Colbert treacherously put his own brother Croissy in the place of the fallen Minister, and Louvois was thus made the victim of the odious game. (Feugère. *" Bourdaloue. Sa Prédication et Son Temps,"* p. 383.) A casual glimpse at the pages of Saint-Simon shows how widespread such rivalries were, to what excesses they led princes and courtiers and royal favorites. How admirably Bourdaloue in the third part of his sermon on " Ambition " (*" Oeuvres: "* Vol. VII, pp. 113–115. Lebel. Ed. Versailles, 1812), without any attempt to paint any specified individual, thus depicts the ambitious man.

What is your conception and idea of an ambitious man entirely engrossed with that one thought of attaining to greatness and power? Were I to tell you that he is by that very fact the natural enemy of all other men, of those I mean with whom his own interests may clash; a man to whom his neighbor's prosperity becomes a torture; a man who beholds virtue and merit in another, only to hate and to oppose them; a man without faith or sincerity; ever ready in case of opposition to betray one neighbor, to thrust a second aside, to slander a third, to ruin this other, if in all that he sees any benefit for himself; a man who makes a divinity and an idol of the grandeur and the fortune to which he aspires; a divinity and idol to which he sacrifices friendship, gratitude, every consideration of duty and honor, . . . a man who loves no one and whom no one can love. . . . Were I to describe him thus, would you not object to me that it is a monster in our midst which I am painting to you?

Nevertheless, if you reflect ever so little and examine what takes place every day among you, you will be constrained to admit that these are the very form and

> features of ambition while it is still so to say in its first stage, still soaring upwards and pursuing its end. . . . And to foster that passion, to keep it alive, to gratify it, we heap up malice, disloyalty and injustice. Even of relatives and friends, we make rivals at first and then secret and hidden foes. By our underhand treacheries we thwart their plans in order to crown our own with success. By violence and force, over which we fling the mantle of our credit and authority, we usurp that which is strictly and lawfully theirs. We look upon the ruin and disgrace of our neighbors as an advantage and a gain for ourselves. . . .

That is a faithful picture of the court of Louis XIV. It finds its counterpart in the political, social and industrial life in our own country. So too this other portrait of the flatterer of power and the time-server. In order to reach the pinnacle of power and to hold that perilous eminence, it was not enough to crush the rivals that barred the way. The ambitious man had to fawn and " crook the pregnant hinges of the knee " before the man or the woman higher up. Then as now it was a degrading task. But then as now, men stooped to wear the shackles of such slavery. How admir-

ably Bourdaloue describes this servility and tyranny! (*"Oeuvres,"* Vol. III, p. 225. Lebel. Ed. Versailles, 1812):

> My brethren, you know it better than I do. Fortune, success, is the idol of the court. It is at court that we find its worshipers. At court everything is sacrificed on the altar of that deity, repose, health, liberty, even your conscience and the salvation of your soul. By that one standard you there regulate and measure your friendships, the respect and regard you owe to others, your services, your acts of courtesy, your duties. Let a man be crowned with success and honors. In that instant he becomes for us a divinity. His vices are transformed into virtues, his words into oracles, his merest wish becomes law. Shall I dare say it? Were a demon from hell to be suddenly lifted to a similar degree of fortune and honor, men would still be found to offer him incense. But let this man, the idol of a few moments ago, fall from his high estate, no longer do men's eyes turn towards his empty shrine. The throng of his selfish and hypocritical worshipers vanishes. They are the first to forget him.

Countless similar passages might be quoted from the Jesuit showing that he knew his age, the manners of the court and the city, the vices of the dukes and peeresses whom he was addressing. They prove that he was not afraid to speak to them with apostolic simplicity and teach them their duty. To Louis he never was afraid to preach the truth. But he spoke it temperately. To imagine that he could do it in any other way and that he could openly address him with the freedom of a modern tribune, is to misunderstand the times and the strategy of the preacher. If the oratorical strategy of Bourdaloue shines conspicuously in every one of his sermons taken individually, it is still more striking when we contemplate it as a whole.

In preaching before the court and the King, Bourdaloue undoubtedly had for one of his ends the conversion of Louis. It is possible even, that he was expressly sent to the Tuileries and Versailles by his Superiors to win back Louis to the practise of his duties. Readers of the work of Father Lauras, "*Bourdaloue. Sa Vie et ses Oeuvres,*" will find in the first volume an account of the dealings of the Jesuit with the King. Bourdaloue's historian there has confronted the sermons of the master with the life of the monarch with admirable discrimination. We can there see

for ourselves the influence which certain sermons such as those on the "Word of God," "Temptations," "Impurity," on the "Passion" and the "Resurrection," on "Holiness" must have had on the prince. In each of them Bourdaloue was slowly beating down the well-set and stoutly defended ramparts of passion which Louis had built around his heart. The process was slow. Now and then it looked as if the apostle and the herald of Christ would have to yield before the shameless enemy he was fighting. But at last he won. Or rather the grace of God conquered. That was a day of triumph for Bourdaloue. His manly eloquence had at last carried the Cross over the ramparts. The campaign is clearly mapped out in the volume of Father Lauras. We can follow its steps and almost measure its daily advance.

In fighting the vices of the King and the court, Bourdaloue, monarchist though he was, a partisan even like most of his contemporaries in France of an absolute monarchy, never forgot the cause of the people. Like Fénelon, Boisguillebert, Vauban and La Bruyère he remembered that there were hunger, misery and disease in France, that while the courtiers at Versailles and Marly were clad in purple, banqueted and danced and sang, the peasants of central France were little better than peons or slaves. In one of his strongest sermons, "*Sur*

les Divertissements du Monde" (*Oeuvres:* Vol. II, pp. 129, 130. Lebel Ed. Versailles, 1812), the preacher reminds his hearers that their feastings and the heartless display of their luxury and folly were an insult both to the religion they professed and the sufferings of their ruined and starving brethren.

How modern today must sound these words of the seventeenth-century orator when he reminds his frilled and curled hearers in his sermon on *"L'Oisiveté,"* that they are not exempt from the universal law of labor and toil:

> I should like to know whether, when God pronounced this curse against the first man: "In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat thy bread," He intended to make a general law comprising Adam's entire posterity, or whether He exempted from that law, certain conditions and classes of men; whether He was all condescension and tenderness towards some, all rigor and severity towards others; whether He destined the powerful and the rich to the sweets of leisure and repose, and the poor to misery and slavery; whether He said to the poor: "You must water the ground with the sweat of your brow," and to the

> others: "You will enjoy all earth's pleasures and delights."

Bourdaloue does not mince the answer. For rich and poor alike, the law, he says, is imperative. Noble and plebeian must equally submit to its stern requirements. In laying down that simple law, Bourdaloue was as patriotic as he was apostolic. He was combating the one error that contributed more than any other perhaps to the downfall of the old aristocracy, the contempt for work and labor and the hopeless attempt of any order or rank of society endeavoring to enjoy the benefits of civilization without doing anything to maintain and develop them.

A rapid survey of the sermons of Bourdaloue would easily show us that his sociological, political and economic theories were just as sound as his theological and moral doctrines.

Speaking before a court where fabulous fortunes were made by injustice and fraud, Bourdaloue, refuting by the purity and logic of his doctrine the accusations leveled against him and his brethren in the "*Provinciales*," lays down in his "Sermon on Restitution" this principle, which must have made many of his hearers squirm: "Without restitution, there is no hope of salvation for you." St. John Chrysostom or Demosthenes never drove a point

home more relentlessly. The words blaze with the fires of zeal that stirred him:

> Of all the duties on the fulfilment of which your salvation depends, none is so strict and imperative as this. That duty cannot be smoothed away or scaled down or made less binding. Here there can be no compromise. It is an obligation of the strictest nature, so says St. Thomas Aquinas, the Angel of the Schools, and that whether we consider it in as far as it relates to the ministers of God, or to God Himself. It is an obligation of the strictest nature in as far as it affects the men who are the ministers of God, because they cannot dispense from it; and in as far as it affects God, because while He can dispense from it, He will not do so. Pay attention, I beg you, to what I say.
>
> God has conferred on the men who here below are His ministers an almost limitless power. They may in virtue of the jurisdiction which they exercise, considered in its plenitude, dispense from the most binding laws of the Church, absolve from its most terrifying censures, free from the most binding oaths, put an end to the

obligations of the most solemn vows, blot out from the soul the most heinous crimes, free the penitent from the pains and chastisements the most lawfully imposed. In countless ways all these powers are theirs. But suppose that there is question of restitution. Startling to say, my dear brethren, these very men whom the Scripture calls gods, and whom it considers well-nigh omnipotent, are powerless. Those keys given of old to St. Peter have no longer the power of opening heaven to the usurper, the wrong-doer whoever he be, as long as he remains in unjust possession of his neighbors' goods. And the Church of God, which in every thing else can bind and loose, gives here clearly to understand that her own hands are tied.

That is not all. For according to learned theologians, who in this are but the echo of the Angelic Doctor, God Himself, in His dealings with us, to speak in the strictest meaning of the terms, cannot in this give us a dispensation. They remind us of course that as absolute and sovereign Lord of all things, He can transfer the actual holding and the ownership and title of my property, to the man who has stolen

> it from me. For I possess nothing over which God has not still stronger claims and titles than I have. But as long as He does not make this transfer, as long as the property is mine and belongs to me, God Himself, all God that He is, cannot free the man, whoever he be, who has taken it from me, of the solemn obligation of restoring it. Why? Because this obligation is necessarily and of its very nature, bound up with the eternal and unchanging law of sovereign justice.

What must Louis, thus brought face to face with his ceaseless and unjust wars, what must the gamblers, the profiteers and the shady financiers of Versailles, have thought of their ill-gotten goods and their lordly fortunes built upon the wrecks of devastated provinces and the starving poor? Yet Bourdaloue has not yet done. The whip-lash writhes, hisses and stings and falls and scourges again and yet again, as, imitating Our Lord, he upsets the tables of the money-changers. He closes this sermon with the threat of God's vengeance one day surely to strike the guilty rich, if they do not repent, and especially, if they do not make restitution:

> What, I ask you, have you done by heaping up income on income, revenue on reve-

nue, gain upon gain, by taking everywhere and so to say with both hands, and never giving back or restoring anything? Even now, you realize what you have done! And you will realize it for all eternity. You have piled up a treasure of wrath for yourselves for the awful day of God's anger. You have raised against you as many accusers as there are wretched beings whom you have ground down in oppression, and whose ruin built up your fortune and your wealth. Do you not hear their cries as they ascend to the throne of God? God hears them. That is enough. Yes, He hears the cries of those domestics whose services you so sternly require, but to whom you so heartlessly refuse their salary and reward. He hears the complaints of those merchants and business men, who clothed and fed you, who supported you with their goods, and who never received from you their just pay; the wails and the complaints of those workmen who wore themselves out in toiling for you and never touched their salary, of your creditors whom you wearied by your delays, and deprived by fraud and trickery of their undoubted rights. Yes, He hears the cries of injured and wronged orphans

> and wards, of entire families whom you have ruined. Once more, the Lord, the God of Israel, hears them all. Who, I ask you, will protect you from the blows of His outraged justice, and the bolts with which He is armed to crush you?

This is the language of a genuine social reformer. Or rather it is the inspired message of a priest who must speak the truth of which he is the official guardian. It is an eloquent refutation of the charge of those who say that in the stifling air of Versailles even the spiritual advisers of the King were afraid to teach him his duties.

Bourdaloue does not spare the heartless rich, the gambler, the ambitious intriguer. The worldly woman, in every stage of her sinful follies, finds him just as stern a censor. But he is too much of a gentleman, and still more, too good a priest and a religious, to turn his pulpit into a stage for the sensational presentation of the wiles and the shameless devices of the more daring adventuress, or the weaknesses of the woman less hardened in the ways of sin. He speaks plainly, but with a reserve and a decorum which it would be well for modern speakers to observe. In the sermon on "Scandal," preached before the court in 1686, he admirably brings out the gravity of scandal in a

mother for instance, whose duty it is to bring up in the person of her daughters, servants of Our Lord and brides of Christ, but who brings up in reality victims of Satan and slaves of the vanities and pleasures of the world. Such mothers may preach virtue to their children, but they undo their teaching by their lives. He continues, and asks: "What effect can the lessons and the reprimands of a mother produce, whose reputation has already been tainted, in a daughter who has lost the innocence of the dove, and who, now that her eyes have been opened, has perhaps become as wise as the serpent?" (*Oeuvres*. Tome I. p. 100.)

It would be easy to gather from the pages of the orator lifelike portraits of the worldly woman, of the *dévote,* who in her devotions follows her whims and not the spirit of the Gospel or the direction of the Church. Darker pictures, which it is not necessary to reproduce, bring before us the audacities in dress, in language, in amusements, the soul and nation-searing scandals caused at Versailles, at Marly, by women who, like Madame de Montespan, left a blazing trail of sin behind them. It is no wonder that Madame de Montespan, the arch-sinner of them all, damned the preacher with faint praise. She had reason not to be satisfied with him. Yet perhaps even she must have been grateful in the end. Even in that cold

heart, the shafts of the saintly Jesuit seem at last to have struck home and to have stirred the long atrophied cords of remorse and repentance.

A man of his times in the best sense of the word, Bourdaloue played his part in their controversies, but not like an unprincipled partisan. The heat of discussion never carried him into bitterness or sarcasm. He entered the arena only when he thought it necessary, for it was a task for which he felt little inclination. The vindication of Christian and Catholic dogma did not form the principal object of his preaching. But Catholic dogma was always the solid foundation on which he built. There was no need, at Paris or Versailles at least, for him to prove the truths of Christianity. His audiences believed them. It is only in passing therefore that he attacks the atheist, the unbeliever, the Lutheran or the Calvinist. On several occasions, however, he unmasks one of the principal errors of Luther, the doctrine of justification by faith alone without works. With the Fathers of the Church to guide him, the orator shows in his sermon on " Faith," for the third Sunday after Epiphany, that without faith our works are dead, and that faith not vivified by works is a vain and empty thing.

Like most of his contemporaries in France, he believed that the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes

was justified. Modern scholarship has explained the reasons of the approval given to that measure by the greatest Frenchmen of the seventeenth century. Recently the French Academy conferred one of the coveted Thérouanne prizes on the Abbé Dedieu for his learned work: "*Le Rôle Politique des Protestants Français.*" (Paris, Bloud, 1921.) The Abbé Dedieu takes up, it is true, a period subsequent to the Revocation of the Edict. His book is mainly concerned with the period from 1688 to the last stages of the reign of Louis XIV. It shows conclusively that during that time Protestantism in France fostered understandings, amounting to conspiracy and treason, with the domestic and foreign enemies of the country, and that one of the leaders of the French Huguenots, the famous and in many ways remarkable Minister Jurieu, was at the head of a vast and clever spy system, which betrayed to England and Holland the secrets of the French navy and the military strength of such important harbors as Brest, Saint-Malo, Rochefort and Toulon.

The French Huguenots were playing for power. Their machinations reached these treasonable depths only after the Edict of Nantes had been annulled. But they had not been quiet during the earlier part of the reign. The revocation was prompted to a large extent by political motives.

Whatever harshness was connected with its enforcement, the Catholic Chuch never approved. *Dragonnades* against Protestants merely because they were Protestants are just as odious in the sight of Catholics as pogroms against Jews merely because they are Jews, or Cromwellian drives against Irish Catholics on account of their religion and their faith. Religious persecution in any form is odious to the Catholic Church. Though approving of the Act of Revocation, Bishops like Bossuet, Fénelon, Le Camus, Percin de Montgaillard, protested against the severity of its application. Through his Nuncio in England, Pope Innocent XI begged James II to intercede with Louis for the Huguenots.

Bourdaloue's direct contribution to the fight against the Protestant heresy, while solid, is relatively small. We find traces of it in his "*Eloge Funèbre de Henri de Bourbon,*" in his charity sermons for the *Nouveaux Catholiques* and the Irish College in Paris, and in a few more passages, such as his sermon for the Feast of St. Peter on obedience to the Church.

On the dangerous errors of the Jansenists then occupying the mind of the public, and in which his own religious brethren played such a prominent part, he could not keep silent. His friend Boileau, ardent admirer though he was of the "*Grand*

Arnauld" and of everything Jansenist, admitted that Bourdaloue had greatly contributed to the defeat of the Port Royal party. For the modern lay reader, the discussions which then agitated the public on grace and free-will have little interest. Suffice it to say that Bourdaloue, with that firmness and solidity of judgment which always characterized him, and his never-failing Catholic instinct, maintained against both Semi-Pelagians and Pelagians the necessity of that "prevenient grace" which was so bitterly attacked, and at the same time stoutly vindicated the rights and privileges of free-will.

According to the Jesuit preacher, we are not free, either to refuse grace, or to summon it at will. But once we have received it, we are free to use it for our good, or to fling it away. Bourdaloue will not admit that even the good actions performed in a state of grievous sin are necessarily evil, for according to him and the teaching of the Catholic Church, such actions may still be useful and may help us to return to the path of salvation. Perhaps at times, when speaking of God as withdrawing his grace from the sinner and abandoning him to himself, he might be accused of rigorism. ("*Dictionnaire de la Théologie Catholique.*" II. art. Bourdaloue). But the cases are few and unimportant. The principal sermons in which the

preacher treated of the Jansenist errors, the sermons on "*La Sévérité de la Pénitence*," "*La Sévérité Evangélique*," "*La Grâce*," "*La Communion*," and a few others, are marked by the soundest theological principles and the zeal and charity of a man who, rising above the empty victories of the controversial champion, looks only to the good of souls.

On the quarrel in which the apostle of Quietism, Madame Guyon, supported for a time by Fénelon, preached her alluring but dangerous doctrines, Bourdaloue left little else than his letter to Madame de Maintenon on "*Le Moyen Court*" of Madame Guyon, and a brief reference in his sermon on prayer. His was too well balanced a mind and too judicial a temperament, to be in the least swayed by chimerical ideals and the false mysticism which warped the mind of the gentle Archbishop of Cambrai. On the question of Gallicanism, on the other hand, we could wish that Bourdaloue were more explicit. For Gallicanism and the liberties of the Gallican Church in their exaggerated and more dangerous forms he could have but little sympathy. If driven to their natural conclusion, they would inevitably lead to a formal break with Rome. On the question of Papal infallibility, Bourdaloue kept silent. We would have welcomed a clear, definite and formal accept-

ance of that dogma from the Jesuit teacher. That infallibility of the Pope was not of course yet defined. But he insists on the infallibility of the Church and proclaims its spiritual supremacy and sovereignty over all earthly powers.

Chapter XIII

AN INCOMPARABLE STRATEGIST

THE Jesuit orator is not satisfied with stating his observations clearly and forcibly; he has the picturesque phrase, the dramatic sense; he paints his personages, he brings them before us on the scene briefly and with great reserve, but with undeniable power. Like all those who have swayed men from the platform, the senate, the pulpit, the bar, Bourdaloue knew full well that there the language must be large, ample, energetic, bold. When their "thoughts on awful subjects dwell, damnation and the dead," "when their own lives, and the fate of their wives, their children, and their country, hang on the decision of the hour," men cannot and do not talk as they would at a tea-party. Then passion speaks, and finds words too weak. Action, "sublime, noble, godlike action," dominates the man and adds an irresistible energy to his winged phrase, then throbbing with manhood's very soul. Bourdaloue knew his audience too well not to influence them by all the legitimate means at his command, although he

always does so with perfect sincerity and self-restraint, and with serene calm and repose, infallible signs of strength. He had taught rhetoric, he had written a booklet on the subject. He knew from floor to ceiling the arsenal where rhetoric has stored her glittering weapons, and he had only to go to the proper rack and pick out the arm he needed. Leaving a score of instances aside, take a single passage, probably one of the best known of our orator and which every reader will welcome again. It is from a sermon on the Passion, and contains one of the finest figures of " dialogism " in literature. Of that figure Demosthenes makes a frequent and noble use. For once, perhaps, the Jesuit here beats the Greek on his own ground.

The preacher has just stated in his sermon on the Passion, that Barabbas had been preferred to Our Lord. Bourdaloue then stops, turns upon his hearers and says:

> A God put on the same level with Barabbas, and to whom Barabbas is preferred by a blind and fickle mob! How often have we not outraged Our Lord in the same way as the Jewish people! How often, after receiving Him in triumph, as it were, in Holy Communion

have we not, carried away by our passions, preferred to this God of glory some pleasure or some advantage we longed for in violation of His law? How often, divided in allegiance between conscience, that unerring guide, and passion, which blinded and led us astray, have we not ourselves repeated that iniquitous sentence, that shameful preference of the creature to God? Conscience which, in spite of us, sits enthroned within us as umpire and judge, thus addresses us: "Well, what will you do? There is your pleasure, and there, your God. Which do you prefer? You cannot have both at the same time: you must give up your pleasure or your God. Choose. . . ." And that passion which by the worst of treasons had blinded and seduced our hearts made us cry out: "I must have my pleasure." "But then," conscience secretly and interiorly answered us, "what becomes of your God? . . . What then shall I do with Jesus?" "I care not what happens to my God," passion defiantly answered. "I want my own gratification; my mind is made up." "But do you not realize," conscience insisted, by the remorse it stirred up within you, "that

in allowing yourself this sinful indulgence, you must a second time cause the death of your Lord and Master and crucify Him anew in your own heart?" "No matter, let Him be crucified! I must have my way! Let Him be crucified!" "But once more, what evil has He done, and why betray Him thus?" "My pleasure, the satisfaction of my passion, that is my reason! and since my God stands in the way, since the gratification of that pleasure crucifies Him anew! then, I say it, let Him be crucified. . . ."

A correct picture, my dear Brethren, of what takes place every day in the heart of men; of what takes place in your heart and mine, as often as we fall into sin, sin which causes the death of Christ and the death of our soul. In this precisely, lie the grievousness and the malice of sin. I know that you do not always speak, that you do not always express yourselves in exactly these terms and so positively. But after all, without speaking so clearly and openly, there is a language of the heart which says all that." (Sermon: "The Passion." Vol. III, p. 52.)

This soul-drama so powerfully reproduced justifies Madame de Sévigné's admiration.

Such insight into the secrets of the heart is the index of no ordinary mind. That mind was trained and refined by years of study, it was rounded off and perfected by contact with the world from many angles. Bourdaloue was not "deep versed in books, but shallow in himself." He was a serious thinker. Yet in reading his sermons we cannot but be impressed by his extensive and accurate theological erudition, the rich and varied stores he has at his command. The Scriptures he knows thoroughly, its sacred words fall easily and naturally from his lips. Unlike Bossuet, however, he does not seem to be deeply impressed by their sublimity, their majesty and grandeur. What he looks for in the Psalms, in Job, in Isaias, in St. Paul, in the Gospels, is first and foremost their moral power; he uses them primarily to instruct. He quotes them to settle a question, to decide a point.

Anatole Feugère in his searching volume, "*Bourdaloue. Sa Prédication et Son Temps*" (Chap. II, p. 115), notices now and then in our author a few of those exaggerated, mystic and symbolic interpretations of Scripture so popular when he first began to preach. The criticism is just. Even great men, like Bourdaloue, cannot always "uncentury" themselves, and yield at times to the tastes of the day. Bourdaloue is

equally at home, perhaps even more, with the Fathers. Amongst these, St. Augustine, St. John Chrysostom, Tertullian, are his favorites. Frequently he reminds his hearers that he is but following in the path which these giants trod before. The theologians of the Middle Ages and the schoolmen are familiar to him. He quotes, and you may be sure he has carefully read, Richard and Hugh of St. Victor, Tostatus, the Abbot Rupert, John of Avila, William of Paris, Arnauld of Chartres, Guerric of Rheims, Hildebert of Tours. The teacher speaks to us still from the printed page. And behind all that vast, accurate erudition there was a fertile and inventive mind.

Chapter XIV

A MIGHTY BUILDER

THE fertility of Bourdaloue, his inventive powers have seldom been surpassed in the pulpit. We have not of course, in what remains to us of the Jesuit, all that he either wrote or preached, nor anything like it. But in spite of this, what treasures are laid out before us! Exclusive of sketches and plans we have more than one hundred and twenty sermons from his pen. Every one of these is a monument of compact and massive proportions. To illustrate such powers of invention, we can pick out a few of those masterpieces at random almost. One subject, the Last Judgment, has been completely treated four times, and once again sketched in outline. The Passion furnishes four sermons, to which must be added a series of Lenten Exhortations on its various scenes. The Purification of Our Lady gives us three, so also the Nativity of Our Lord and the Resurrection. In these, there is no repetition. In every one some new phase of the subject is presented.

Examine the sermons on the Passion. In one

the speaker takes for his text the words of St. Paul: "For both the Jews require signs, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ Crucified, unto the Jews indeed a stumbling block, and unto the Gentiles foolishness: but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." (1 Cor. I, 22–24.) Here Bourdaloue proves from the sufferings, the ignominies and the death of the Man-God, that, as his text shows, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. Good critics, as we have seen, pronounce that sermon the masterpiece of the Christian pulpit. In the second, the text reads: "And there followed him a great multitude of people, and of women, who bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning to them said: Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not over me, but weep for yourselves and your children." (St. Luke XXIII, 27, 28.) By a happy application of the text, the proposition is: Instead of weeping over Our Lord, let us bewail that which caused His sacred tears. It is thus that on this Good Friday we shall sanctify our tears and render them salutary. And then in a comprehensive division springing out of his subject, he proves: 1. That sin caused the Passion of Christ; 2. That sin renews that sacred Passion; 3. That sin but too often renders that sacred Passion useless and vain.

The third sermon develops these words of Our Lord: "Now is the judgment of the world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself. (Now this he said, signifying what death he should die.)" (St. John XII, 31–33.)

The theme of the orator as he here studies the Passion of Our Lord, is: The Judgment of the World. That, he says, is the mystery he is trying to bring home to his hearers. With his usual skill and method he divides his theme. This time it has two parts. In the first he considers Christ judged by the world. In the second, the world judged by Christ. It is an exhaustive and suggestive treatment.

First Part: Christ Judged by the World

1. By the tribunal or court of Caiphas, which is the tribunal of prejudice and passion; 2. By the tribunal or court of Herod which is that of the free-thinker and the libertine; 3. By the tribunal or court of Pilate, the tribunal of a false and worldly wisdom.

1. Our Lord is judged and condemned by the tribunal of Caiphas. The preacher calls that tribunal the tribunal of passion and prejudice. Why? Because, he answers, prejudice and passion alone presided, so to say, at this first trial, for at

its bar, and in opposition to and in violation of all laws of justice and equity, the enemies of Christ, the High Priests, the Scribes and the Pharisees, became His judges. 2. Because in this first trial to which He was subjected, no other forms or procedure were observed, but those which prejudice, hate and passion suggested, namely, violence, perjury and calumny. 3. Because prejudice, hatred and passion alone carried the sentence into execution. Hardly has the High Priest pronounced Our Lord guilty of death, when His very judges begin to outrage and insult Him. They persuade, moreover, the people to ask of Pilate to release to them Barabbas instead of Christ. Such even to-day, concludes the preacher at the end of this section, is the verdict of the world when it deals with Christ and His work. It is a verdict dictated by passion and hatred.

2. Our Lord is judged by the court of Herod, the tribunal of the freethinker and the libertine. For there Christ was mocked and scorned, as He is scorned and mocked by so many infidels and unbelievers. Here, Bourdaloue keenly analyzes that state of *libertinage* or practical infidelity and corruption of the heart, already creeping into the society of his day. In the court of Herod, as in the court before him, he finds four of its marks. He masterfully depicts them: 1. A vain and empty

curiosity. Herod, a man without religion or faith, had heard of the miracles of Christ. He wanted to see Him perform one. 2. Ignorance. Our Lord performs none of the miracles or wonders which in his folly Herod expected from Him. He performs others, perhaps more stupendous, miracles of patience, humility and meekness. Herod contemptuously ignores them. 3. Contempt of the things of God. Herod finding nothing in Our Lord to satisfy his idle curiosity ridicules Him. 4. The spirit of mockery. Through derision, Herod orders Our Lord to be clothed in a white garment and treats Him like a fool. In all this, adds the preacher, we have a perfect picture of the scoffer and the libertine.

3. Our Lord is condemned by the court of Pilate, the tribunal of worldly wisdom, policy and conduct. 1. A conduct, which is a feeble and cowardly one, whenever the interests of God are at stake. Pilate should have used his authority to protect the rights of God. He dares not do it. 2. A policy and a conduct full of burning zeal when worldly interests are at stake. As soon as Pilate hears the magic name of Caesar and sees how the cause before him may affect his relations with his imperial master, he is all zeal and ardor, but in his own behalf. 3. A conduct and a policy, all subtlety, artifice and hypocrisy, making every

possible attempt and compromise to conciliate the interests of the world with the interests of God. Pilate condemns Our Lord to be scourged, thereby hoping, on the one hand, to save the life of the accused, and on the other, to satisfy the rage and hatred of the mob. 4. A policy and a conduct ready for and determined on any crime in order to gain its selfish aims. Driven by the Jews, who threaten to denounce him to the Emperor, Pilate at last yields to them and betrays Our Saviour into their cruel hands. In all this, the speaker concludes, we have a summary of the conduct and the policy pursued by the world.

Second Part: The World Judged by Christ

The same signs and wonders which will appear at the Last Judgment, appeared also at the death of Christ. The sun was eclipsed, the earth trembled, the dead arose, to prove that the Son of God, in that very hour, had begun to judge the world. For that reason He was proclaimed King on the very Cross: Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews, just as He is described as King in the description of the Last Judgment.

In the Last Judgment He will again do what He did when He announced His Gospel to the world, and when He pronounced His anathemas against worldlings: "Woe to you." "But," says St.

Jerome, " it is upon the Cross that He solemnly and officially pronounced these anathemas, not by His words but by His deeds and example: ' Woe to you, rich; woe to you who seek your consolation in this world.' "

Three striking circumstances prove this truth: 1. In the Last Judgment, the Sign of the Cross will appear in the heavens. But the terrors it will then hold and with which it will strike the sinner, that Cross has today in the same degree. 2. According to St. John, the despair which the damned will feel, will consist in seeing the God whom they insulted and crucified. But even today and at this very moment, the infidel and the worldling must face that same God and the remorse of conscience which their crimes excite in their hearts. 3. The prophets inform us that the day of the Last Judgment is to be, in a special manner, the day of the wrath of the Lord. But, on the other hand, it is evident that God already began to exercise His wrath and His vengeance in the Passion and through the Passion of Christ. Hence it follows, according to Isaias, that the day of Redemption is also a day of vengeance and wrath, and consequently the day of the judgment of the world.

If we look for specific and special effects of this judgment, they may easily be pointed out.

Christ died on the Cross condemning some, saving others. He condemns Judas, the Jews, and the unrepentant sinner dying at His side: a judgment and a verdict of stern and rigorous justice. He saves the penitent thief, converts some even of those who crucified Him: a judgment and a verdict of mercy.

By our repentance and by our holy lives, let us endeavor to win a favorable and merciful verdict.

The architecture of this oratorical masterpiece is self-evident. Perhaps here and there the framework might be less striking to the eye and more deftly masked. But solidity and power speak from the rugged simplicity and unity of the plan, as well as from the admirably selected details. In a fourth sermon, of a different character altogether, more homely and familiar, though preached before the King, the First Epistle of St. Peter furnishes the text: " Who his own self bore our sins in his body upon the tree: that we being dead to sins, should live to justice." (I Ep. St. Peter II, 24) And the preacher tells his royal hearer and his court that they must try to realize how Christ abhors sin and how they themselves must hate it, for — and this is his division — sin caused the death of Christ and Christ caused the death of sin and destroyed it.

No two of these sermons are exactly alike. Even when the idea, as in the last case, has been pre-

sented before, the originality of the author allows him to handle it anew and to place it in a different light. There is no repetition. The orator is not obliged to borrow from himself and put himself in quotation-marks. We feel that without exhausting, not the matter, for in the greater number of the sublime subjects he treated, that would be impossible, but without exhausting his powers, Bourdaloue could add sermon to sermon and not tire his hearers. In every discourse, in every exhortation or instruction, in the two Funeral Orations pronounced by him, that of the Prince de Condé and of Henri de Bourbon, we recognize the same power.

Sainte-Beuve, a safe guide where purely literary matters are in question, speaks with something like enthusiasm of the funeral oration of the Prince de Condé. He calls it " original," " new." It may be read, he says, side by side with the masterpieces of Bossuet, and Bourdaloue will not be " overwhelmed " by the comparison. From one point of view even, he adds, Bourdaloue has perhaps the advantage; he is more natural, he is truer to life, more in harmony in everything with the tone and requirements of the Christian pulpit. (" *Causeries du Lundi.*" Vol. IX.) In contrasting Bourdaloue's discourse with the masterpiece of the Eagle of Meaux, Charles Butler writes:

CONDÉ

Through life, the Prince de Condé showed great external reverence for religion; but his youth was dissolute; during many years he was untrue to his king and country, and, for some time, commanded against them, the armies of Spain, whom France then considered her natural and inveterate enemy. But the twenty last years of his life were religious and exemplary, and his death, edifying. On the criminal part of his life, Bossuet employed only three lines. Bourdaloue nobly plunged into it. The prince's long profligacy, his neglect of religion, and his rebellion against his king, Bourdaloue held up to his audience, in their true colors, and dilated on them, through all the second part of his discourse. At the same time, he showed, that in the midst of his errors and his crimes, the prince preserved much of what was really great and good: and thus, while he descanted, in the very strongest terms, on the follies, the vanities, and the crimes of his hero, he made the audience lose sight of them, in the blaze of glory with which, in the midst of all his indictment of the prince, he took care to surround him.

When, after he had amply descanted on

this part of the subject, Bourdaloue described the prince, on the approach of age, sitting down to the study of religion, making his peace with his God and his King, and atoning by the retirement and regularity of the twenty last years of his life, for the errors and wanderings of his youth, and showed how honorable it was to the prince to be so converted to religious duty, and how honorable it was to religion to have such a convert, he filled the audience with veneration for the illustrious subject of his discourse, and impressed on them the most salutary truths. Bossuet was so struck with the noble candor and simplicity with which Bourdaloue opened this part of his discourse, that he turned to the prelate near him, and cried out loudly enough to be generally heard, "*Voilà notre maître à tous*" — "Behold the master of us all!" ("The Life of Bossuet," p. 276.)

Bourdaloue is not satisfied with a mere superficial treatment of his subject. He digs and tunnels into it. We feel that he has long and earnestly meditated it before the altar and the crucifix. He was penetrated with the spirit and unction of the

Gospel. He probes deep down and mines out its hidden treasures. The stream of his eloquence ever flows deep, steady, clear. "Strong without rage, without o'erflowing full," it bears on its tide no swan-like, airy caravels, but stout-timbered, massive craft, freighted, not with baubles, or finery, but, like the galleons of old Spain, with bars of silver and ingots of gold.

But the stored-up wealth is not allowed to remain a disordered mass. If the inventive powers are so striking, the skill in disposition is not inferior. That disposition is easy, natural, because everywhere may be seen, what Brunetière has graphically termed "the interior circulation" of the same thought, coursing up and down the subject through all its arteries. There is orderly disposition because there is rigid unity. It is evident that Bourdaloue considered unity in a work of art as absolutely necessary, and that he would have heartily subscribed to Buffon's well-known words:

> Why [asks Buffon] are the works of nature so perfect? It is because every one is a complete, a perfect whole, because she labors and toils upon an unchanging plan from which she never deviates or strays. She prepares in silence the seeds, the germs

of her productions; by one and the same act, she sketches, she outlines the primitive form of every living thing, she develops, she perfects it by an unbroken progressive movement, and within a fixed, definite time.

The result startles us, but it is rather the seal and impress of the Divinity stamped upon it which should cause our wonder and admiration. The human mind can create, can produce nothing, until vitalized and rendered fertile by experience and deep thought. Its varied knowledge and information contain the seeds, the germs of its productions. And if the human mind imitates nature in its progress, in its onward march and in its toil, if on the wings of contemplation it soars to the highest, the sublimest truths, if it combines them, links and welds them together, if by deep reflection it forms a compact, systematic whole, then it is that it builds and rears on firm, unshaken foundations noblest monuments destined to immortality (*"Discours sur le Style."*)

True to this cardinal principle, Bourdaloue evolves his subject from a central idea, and under his touch it develops and unfolds, not, as in the

sermons of Massillon, with the luxuriant growth of some tropical frond, nor, as in the discourses of Bossuet, with the strength of some lordly oak. But boldly, though bare perhaps of ornament, columnar, it rises like a mountain-pine, whose roots firm-anchored, strike deep into a hard, yet not ungenerous soil.

A definite subject clearly mapped out, a definite practical lesson to be hammered home to his hearers, to be repeated again and again, to be summoned up before them, dressed out in another garb, it is true, but in such a way that everybody recognizes an old friend, and is glad to see him, though he tells us plain, unvarnished truths to our face, these are the main lines on which our orator builds the superstructure of his sermons. Once the text given, a text usually chosen with admirable appropriateness from the Gospel of the day, after the exordium, grave, simple, dignified, the proposition stated, the division announced and frequently repeated in several forms, so that it cannot be misunderstood, the orator enters into the heart of the subject. Two or three divisions or points of about the same length each, subdivided again into minor parts, three or four or even six in number, a brief peroration in which a last assault is delivered upon the position of the enemy, such is the general mould of the sermons.

Nothing very original or new in all that, you will say; it is the method of the masters. It is substantially the method of Demosthenes in his First Philippic, of Cicero in the *Pro Milone,* the *Pro Lege Manilia* and the *Pro Cluentio,* of Burke in " Conciliation." If carefully analyzed, the speeches of John Bright and Paolo Segneri, of Fisher Ames, Abraham Lincoln and William Jennings Bryan, are built practically on the same lines. Nature itself suggests them. But such is the control of Bourdaloue over the instrument he has chosen, so admirably does he suit the means to his end, that his skill almost amounts to genius. He marshals his arguments as some skilful captain marshals his troops, as Turenne in his time, as Ferdinand Foch in the World War, marshaled his. There is in every sermon the *imperatoria virtus,* the instinct of the strategist who sees his campaign as a whole, who leaves nothing to chance, who, at any given moment, knows what every unit is doing and what it is meant to do; when to try a frontal attack, when to out-flank the foe; when to hurl his heavy battalions at the enemy's breastworks, when to skirmish with his light troops and cut off pickets and supplies; how many regiments he can use, how many keep in reserve. If Bourdaloue seldom charges down upon the foe with all colors out, banners and pennants streaming in the battle smoke, drums beat-

ing and all his guns thundering at once, as the great Condé did in actual warfare at Rocroy or Lens, or as Bossuet did in the pulpit, he calmly moves his forces to the attack, he presses right on, beats down the opposing squares, drives the enemy before him from position to position, from trench to trench, until the despairing foe hoists the white flag over his battered walls, surrenders and lays down his arms.

It is no wonder that on witnessing the steady advance of the orator, on listening to those arguments welded like chain-shot, that rough old fighter, Marshal de Grammont, carried away by his enthusiasm, suddenly cried out: "S' death! But he's right." No wonder that Condé, at sight of the soldier-son of Loyola, mounting the pulpit in a crowded and noisy church, rose as if he had seen his old opponents Nassau or Montecuculli, and thundered "Silence! Here's the enemy!" No wonder Madame de Sévigné wrote that the power, the serried arguments, the dramatic pictures of the orator often "took her breath away." The profound originality of the Jesuit, his keen observation, the concentration of his efforts on some central, vital point, his firm hold on the facts of life, the skill with which part is mortised to part, and every argument placed where and when it will tell most, are some at least of the secrets of his art.

He knows the value of synthesis, yet few can better analyze a subject. Perhaps he has at times abused this power of analysis, and two or three of his divisions show a little more ingenuity than judgment. But the instances are few. A well-known example is found in a sermon on the Immaculate Conception: " But this is but the bare substance and essence of our misery, of our wretched state; but see, here is its very acme and climax, here the excess of it, here the wonder of it, here its heinousness, here the abomination of it, and, if this be not enough, here, to use the words of the Prophet, is the very abomination of desolation." (Sermon: " The Immaculate Conception." Vol. III, p. 155.) At first sight, this looks like hair-splitting, but if we read these various points, we shall soon find out that the ideas are developed naturally, and with uncommon originality and strength.

Chapter XV

A SMOOTH-TONGUED HERALD

A STYLE in perfect keeping with his subject crowns the Jesuit's work. A Protestant writer, Vinet, of Geneva, says: "Considered in its entirety, the style of Bourdaloue is an eloquent style. Shall I dare say it? No one is more steadily and constantly eloquent." ("*Le Semeur,*" 1843.) Bourdaloue, we admit, did not create, like Bossuet, a new language. He did not possess like the Bishop of Meaux, grandeur and sublimity of thought, blended with a Homeric, a Biblical simplicity and directness of expression, altogether unique in French literature. Neither has his diction Bossuet's freshness and sudden audacities, his startling but happy combinations, his imperial sway over word and phrase. Our orator lacks the penetrating unction of Fénelon, the persuasive harmony of Massillon. But throughout he has what we would call manliness of expression. "Clearness, force, and earnestness are the qualities which produce conviction" in Bourdaloue, as they do in every orator worthy of the name. With him the

language is never tortured, the thought never over-dressed. Things and thoughts, not words and phrases, are his chief concern. He is always natural. On reading him we are reminded of what Pascal says: "When we meet the natural style we are quite astonished and delighted; we expected to find an author; we find a man" ("*Pensées*"). Quite delighted surely to find such a treasure, for as a genial author tells us in one of his rocking-chair essays: "It is easier to be odd, intense, over-wise, enigmatic, than to be sensible, simple, and to see the plain truth about things." (Birrell. "Res Judicatae," p. 308.) Bourdaloue was neither odd, nor intense, nor over-wise, nor enigmatic; he was one of the most sensible and reasonable of men, he saw the truth clearly, he put it plainly before his audience. Truth's vast stores were so inexhaustible that he did not deem it necessary to deck her out in any garb but her own. Her unadorned yet queenly vesture was enough. Paste and spangles he despised.

> *Non tali auxilio, non defensoribus istis*
> *Tempus eget....*

Truth, he well knew, scorns such weak defenders. If his style is perhaps a little colorless at times and we could wish for more imagination and warmth, it is at least always forcible, clear,

clean-cut. There is nerve and sinew to it, and it is, as the orator's style must always be, since it is meant to sway masses of men, eminently popular.

Bourdaloue realized that it is a mistake to speak to the people in the language of the academies and the schools. Cicero himself, phrase-weaver and word-wizard, accomplished trope-juggler and rhetorical acrobat, makes one of his characters say: "*Ennio delector quod non discedit a communi more verborum*," which may be freely rendered: "I'm mighty fond of dear old Ennius, for he talks just like you and me." The shrewd Jesuit had the good sense, while addressing a polished and critical court, to discard all affectation and pedantry, the showy, but cheap prettinesses of speech, which would have degraded his sacred calling. Had he dared to use them, he would have been on insecure ground, for there were dozens of court gallants and fine ladies, the La Rochefoucaulds and the Villerois, the La Fayettes and the Sablés and Montespans, who could have beaten him at that foolish game. With splendid judgment and with that forgetfulness of self which characterizes every word he spoke, he chose the plain, everyday speech of the society and the world around him. So popular was it, that he did not have to change it, when he went

into the southern provinces, and the peasants of Languedoc found no difficulty, to their wonder and amazement, in following the brilliant preacher of the Tuileries. And Cicero's words come back to us: "*Id enim summi oratoris est summum oratorem populo videri*": "The unmistakable sign of a great orator is that he appears so in the eyes of the masses." Bossuet has his style, so Racine perhaps and Molière, and certainly La Fontaine. Bourdaloue speaks the plain, clear, natural language of the seventeenth century at its best.

But simple and plain as it is, it is not unoratorical. It has driving power behind it and rhythm. They can be easily detected in these few sentences, from a Sermon on the "Thought of Death":

> Your passions hurry you forward, and often it seems to you that it is impossible fully to control your ambitions, your insatiable desires of pleasure and wealth: *Memento!* Remember! Remember! think well on this. What after all is the ambition, what are the desires of a man, who one day must surely die! You deliberate on some important matter, and you know not what to decide: *Memento!* Remem-

> ber! Remember! think well on this. What should be the decision of a man, who one day must surely die! The exercises of your holy religion weary and disgust you, you fulfil your duties carelessly, negligently: Remember! Remember! think well on this. How all important it is that these duties should be faithfully performed by a man, who one day must surely die. (Sermon: "The Thought of Death." Vol. I, p. 172.)

How eloquently the priest makes these Lenten ashes speak! On reading that whole sermon, we forget the preacher, we hear only that best of teachers, Death, and its salutary warnings, cold as a marble tomb, over which, however, beam the torch of faith and the star of hope.

And now and then, there is a sudden flash, of which Bossuet himself might be proud, as in this passage from a panegyric on St. Andrew:

> Behold then, my Brethren, the mighty preacher, whom God has raised up for your instruction. . . . St. Andrew on his cross. Pay no more attention to me, think no more of my words and my zeal, forget even the sacred character of my ministry. I am

today, if you will, but a sounding brass and tinkling cymbal, and it is not for me to preach to you a God crucified. No! It is for this Apostle! It is for this man, nailed to his cross, whose preaching, far more heart-stirring and efficacious than mine, sends forth its echoes into all the churches of the Christian world. Behold him! Behold him, this blameless, irreproachable minister of the Gospel, this eloquent preacher, whom you cannot contradict. But what reproaches may not he address to you? He preaches to you even now the same God, whom he preached to Jew and infidel, a God who saved you by His Cross. Do you really believe it? . . . You have been told again and again, and rightly so, that on the Last Day, the Cross will appear and face you: Then will appear the sign of the Son of Man (Matt. XXIV.) But besides the Cross of Christ, you will have to face another: the cross of St. Andrew. Yes, the cross of this great Apostle, after having been the pulpit from which he taught us, will become a tribunal, from which he will condemn us. "Look, look," will he exclaim, "look at those pagans and infidels; the sight of my cross con-

> verted them. They were pagans, I made them Christians and perfect Christians! " And this will cover us with confusion and shame, etc. (" Panegyric of St. Andrew." Vol. III, pp. 317–318.)

One more quality may be noticed in the style of our author. It has that very gift, for lack of which so many fail, movement. The whole sermon on " Scandal," for instance, rushes on like a swollen stream. From first to last, it gathers momentum at every phrase. As a last example of this consummate art of the master, read this from his sermon on the " Eternity of Hell " :

> Terrified at the thought of such an unhappy fate, I apply all the faculties of my soul to the consideration of that idea of eternity. I view it from every side, I measure its length, its breadth, its height. In order to form a still more vivid picture of that eternity, to represent it in a manner still better suited to my senses, to the human intellect, I use the same comparisons and illustrations the Fathers used, and I make, if I may use the words, the same calculations.
>
> I summon before me in imagination

all the stars that twinkle in the heavens; to that countless host I add all the drops of water gathered in the bosom of the ocean; and if this be not enough, I number, or try to number, all the grains of sand the sea holds on her shores. Then I sound the depths of my own heart; I reason with myself and ask: "When, on those burning coals kindled by the breath and anger of God for a vengeance that will know no end, I should suffer as many centuries and a thousand times more, will eternity have ended for me?" No! No! And why? Because it is eternity, and eternity knows no end.

Absolutely speaking, one might be able to count the number of stars in the heavens, of the drops of water in the sea, of grains of sand on the shores of the ocean. But measure eternity! count in it the number of days, years and centuries! That is impossible! that no one can ever do, because those days, those years, those centuries are without number. Let us be more correct: because in eternity, there are properly speaking neither days, nor years, nor centuries; there is naught else but endless, ceaseless duration.

And this, once more, is the thought on which I fasten, on this I fix my eyes. For, methinks, I see that eternity, I advance further and further into that eternity, and never find its end. I imagine myself enveloped, hemmed and locked in on all sides by that eternity; that whether I rise or descend, wheresoever I go, I ever and always find that eternity; that after a thousand efforts to advance further, I have not made the slightest progress. It is always, always eternity!

I imagine that after long revolving cycles of years, I always see in the midst of that eternity a lost soul, in the same state, in the same desolation, in the same frenzy, in the same despair, and putting myself in the place of that soul, I imagine that in those unending, eternal torments, I feel myself devoured by that fire nothing can ever quench, that I am ceaselessly, forever shedding those tears that nothing can ever dry or wipe from my eyes, that the worm which never dies, forever gnaws into my heart and soul, that I give vent to my despair in those weepings, those wailings, that gnashing of teeth, which can never soften an angry God.

> That idea, that picture of myself before my eyes terrifies me. My limbs even quake and tremble at the thought, and I experience all that the Royal Prophet felt when he exclaimed: "Pierce thou my flesh with Thy fear: for I am afraid of Thy judgments." (Ps. CXVIII, 120.) Sermon: "The Eternity of Hell." Vol. II, p. 388.)

The man who wrote that magnificent passage was an orator. No believer in the truths of the Gospel can read those words and not be terrified. As we read them now, we seem to hear once more the mighty Jesuit and to catch the echoes of that voice, relentless as logic, calm as truth. We see that more than Dantesque vision he summons up, that wretched castaway, lost in that eternity, ever drifting, but to no haven of safety, to no welcome shore, girt with eternity's limitless void, haunted by the eternal wrath of God. The reader trembling at the uncertainty of his own fate, with heart raised to Him, who knows his rising and his setting and his numbered days, will humbly and fervently repeat the sorrowing sinner's prayer: "Pierce Thou my flesh with Thy fear: for I am afraid of Thy judgments."

Chapter XVI

ADSUM!

LOUIS BOURDALOUE must ever remain one of the landmarks, one of the classics of French literature. As long as the Catholic pulpit heralds the truths of faith, he will be one of its proudest names. His work is sound, large, monumental. But great as that work is, the man is greater. In him reason was always eloquent; his life was more eloquent still. No stain, no shadow of a stain rests on his life's page. He knew the world, the court, thoroughly, and he was a part of all he saw. But he moved through the fires of that worse than Babylonian furnace, unscathed. The siren voices of ambition, vanity or pride never seem to have whispered their wily-tongued flattery in his ear. His heart was as a child's. He was supremely unselfish in everything he spoke, in everything he did. He shunned publicity and honors. His cell and a shady nook at the country house of his brethren were dearer to him than the splendors of the Tuileries or Versailles. He worked, he preached to bring souls nearer to God. He lived

for God. In a letter, written towards the end of his life to the General of the Society, he earnestly begged to be allowed to withdraw into retirement and solitude, there to spend the evening of his days in preparation for that eternity he had so forcibly described. He wrote:

> It is now fifty-two years that I have lived in the Society, not for myself, but for others; at least more for others than for myself. A thousand occupations distract me and prevent me from laboring as much as I would like at my perfection, which after all is the one thing necessary. It is my earnest desire to withdraw into retirement and to lead a more tranquil life; I say more tranquil in order that it may be more regular, more holy. I feel my body weakening and bending towards the grave. I have finished my course. Would to God I might add: I have been faithful! ("*Oeuvres.*" Vol. I, p. 29.)

That humble request was not granted. His Superiors had but one Bourdaloue. They could not spare him.

Bourdaloue had never been strong. Neither had he ever spared himself in the work of the ministry.

He had given himself with absolute devotion to the work of preaching. His contemporaries are unanimous in their opinion that he preached with spirit, earnestness, unction and fire. He was assiduous in the exhausting labors of the confessional. Rich and poor alike came to seek his advice. The hospitals, orphan asylums and prisons of the capital saw him unceasingly bringing consolation and comfort to the sick and the outcasts of society. The preparation of his sermons evidently demanded labor and study of the severest nature. As far back as 1672, the health of the orator caused his brethren some alarm. Later on, his General, the kindly and eloquent Paul Oliva, wrote from Rome to the immediate superiors of Bourdaloue in Paris, bidding them take good care of a man whose life was so useful to the Church of God. The same solicitude was manifested by following Generals, by Charles de Noyelle and Thyrsus Gonzalez. From 1669, when he began his career in Paris, until 1697, when he preached for the last time at court, the faithful herald of Christ had not once spared himself. His indomitable will had sustained him in spite of his delicate frame and his declining years.

After the Advent of 1697, Bourdaloue no longer appears in the larger, more fashionable and popular churches and pulpits of the capital. He

confines himself to the chapels and oratories of religious communities and sodalities of pious associations, then so numerous in Paris. The old athlete leaves the larger arena to younger rivals. In the quiet of the Professed House he corrects his sermons and helps Father Daniel in the work which the latter was preparing in defense of his Jesuit brethren in the difficult controversy concerning the Chinese Rites (Campbell: " The Jesuits," c. VIII, *ad fin.*). In that Professed House where the orator spent his last days, Huet, Bishop of Avranches, one of the greatest scholars of his times, one of the editors of the *Delphini* classics, lived as a guest of the Society. He had resigned his Norman bishopric, and in the solitude and hospitality offered by the Jesuits of Paris was preparing for death. Both had known the court and all its great men. They had seen the world in all its pomp. Both were trained and cultured minds. Huet had taught the sons of kings with textbooks, Bourdaloue had taught Louis XIV and James Stuart of England and his Queen from the pulpit. In their own way these men had made history. The friendship which had united them in former days, they renewed now, when both prelate and Jesuit realized that their end was near. Every evening almost, Bourdaloue mounted to the Bishop's modest apartments and the two grave and

reverend elders, we are told, courteously exchanged the news of the day and held sweet and solemn discourse on God and truth, " on man and nature and on human life."

No Boswell has kept the record of these more than Attic nights. Landor's " Imaginary Conversations " contain among others, one peculiarly offensive to Catholics, the dialogue between Louis XIV and his confessor Père La Chaise. Why did he not write one so rich in matter, so full of splendid possibilities, between Huet and Bourdaloue?

A few weeks before his death Bourdaloue was still preaching, still attending to his beloved prisoners. At the end of March, 1704, he visited and consoled the erratic monk Dom Thierry de Viaixnes, accused of libel against the Cardinal de Noailles and then locked up in the castle of Vincennes. Bossuet's eloquent voice was hushed in death on April 12. The death of the Bishop of Meaux came as a warning to Bourdaloue. On May 10, Pentecost Eve, loyal to his friends to the end, he visited the Duc de Gesvres, Governor of Paris, who was seriously ill. Pentecost Sunday, May 11, he himself was so ill that he was obliged to ask the brother who served his Mass to call a priest to help him finish the Holy Sacrifice. Even that day, he had courage to hear a few confessions. He remained master of himself to the last.

That evening the famous Dutch physician, Helvetius, was called to examine him. The physician immediately saw that death was near, and informed the Superior of the house. Bourdaloue overheard his remarks. He quietly reminded him that they had often met before at the bedside of the sick, the doctor for the needs of the body, and he for those of the soul. The physician therefore should not be afraid to say what he thought of his patient's condition. He knew, continued the dying man, that only a miracle could save him. He was fully aware that he was too great a sinner to deserve such a favor. He humbly asked the physician to pray that God might grant him forgiveness and mercy. Then, of his own accord, he asked for the Last Sacraments and received them with such devotion and piety that the assistants were moved to tears. He kept his faculties unimpaired, remaining resigned and prayerful to the last. At 5 A.M., Tuesday, May 13, 1704, he peacefully expired. A few hours after, the Duke de Béthune informed the King that Father Bourdaloue was dead. Louis was deeply moved. He added that a man who had lived as Father Bourdaloue had done, must have been greatly consoled at the approach of death. (Lauras. "*Bourdaloue. Sa Vie et Ses Oeuvres.*" Vol. I, pp. 74–81.)

Chapter XVII

"IRE TAMEN RESTAT NUMA QUO DEVENIT ET ANCUS"

IF the death of Louis XIV himself did not lack a certain dignity not unworthy of a Christian king, it was owing in great part to the dead orator. National and domestic misfortunes were crowding on the head of Louis. In the August of the year in which Bourdaloue died, 1704, the Duke of Marlborough, ably helped by Prince Eugène, had beaten the French troops under Marcin and Tallart at Blenheim, and forced them to abandon German soil. In 1709 one of the most terrible winters France had suffered in years caused the death of thousands from cold and hunger. From the very windows of Versailles the King could hear the jeers and the lampoons directed by the mob against himself, Madame de Maintenon and his Minister, Chamillart. The taxes had ceased to come in. The army was without stores, ammunition, uniforms, arms or shoes. France, harassed on all sides by her enemies, seemed to be in her death-throes.

But when Holland and England wished to impose a shameful peace, the old King refused to dishonor the last days of his reign by a betrayal of France and her glory. On June 12, 1709, he addressed these words to the country:

> Although my affection for my people is no whit the less than that I feel for my own children, although I share all the sufferings inflicted by the war on my faithful subjects, and have plainly shown all Europe that I sincerely desire to let them enjoy peace, I am convinced that they themselves would refuse to accept it on conditions so opposed to justice and to the honor of the French name.

These words roused the whole nation. A weaponless and ragged army was mustered. But it had an incomparable leader, Marshal Villars. Its regiments held Marlborough and Prince Eugène at Malplaquet, in the summer of 1709, and after delays and negotiations endless and uncertain, Villars crushed Prince Eugène at Denain, July 24, 1712, and saved the French monarchy. March 6, 1714, the Peace of Rastadt was signed. It is true that forty years before, Louis would never have consented to its articles. It left France intact but it brought no glory.

LE DUC DE BOURGOGNE

Death meanwhile was busy in the royal family at Versailles. In 1701 Monsieur, the King's brother, had died of apoplexy. In April, 1705, the little Duc de Bretagne, the King's great-grandson, was carried off before he was a year old. On April 14, 1711, the King's eldest son, Monseigneur, that *Grand Dauphin* to whose education Huet and Bossuet had devoted so much care, was carried away by smallpox. By the death of the *Grand Dauphin,* the Duke of Burgundy, Fénelon's pupil, became Dauphin, and his young bride, Marie Adelaïde of Savoy, Dauphiness. On February 12, 1712, the new Dauphiness, the joy and the darling of Louis XIV and Madame de Maintenon, passed away. Seven days later the Dauphin, the former Duke of Burgundy, followed her to the grave. On the eighth of March their son, the second Duc de Bretagne, followed them. Only two direct heirs eligible to the crown were now left, the little Dauphin, the King's great-grandson, the future Louis XV, and the Duc de Berry. The latter died, May 4, 1714. A helpless boy therefore remained the sole barrier between Louis and the extinction of his immediate line. (Boulenger: "The Seventeenth Century," pp. 292–316.)

Ugly rumors began to spread. The public and the court spoke the ominous word *poison.* Suspicions in all likelihood ill-founded were aroused.

But it was not unreasonable that these rapid and sudden deaths should cause alarm. The public and the court still remembered the poison scandals of more than thirty years before. As far back as 1676, when Louis was at the height of his power and Bourdaloue without a rival as a preacher, Marguerite (Marie-Madeleine?) d'Aubray, Marquise de Brinvilliers, together with her accomplice, Sainte-Croix, had been convicted of having actually poisoned or attempted to poison a number of persons. For her crimes the *Marquise* had her head severed and then her lifeless body burnt on the Place de Grève at Paris. In 1679 another scandal brought terror and dismay to the entire country.

The Paris police had tracked and run down a band of criminals, some of them belonging to the very highest ranks of society and bearing the proudest names in France, all accused of wholesale poisoning, and the practise of black magic and satanic rites. The leader was the famous Catherine Deshayes, better known as La Voisin. The King had to appoint a special court to try the accused and her confederates in crime. The case is known in history as that of the *Chambre des Poisons*. Two hundred and thirty persons were put under arrest; about thirty were condemned to death and executed, many others were

either imprisoned or sent into exile. The revelations became so horrifying that Colbert, who kept the King informed daily of the progress of the trial, dared not put the records in writing. Men and women of the highest social and official rank, some of them almost on the steps of the throne, were compromised. For his own honor and for that of France itself the King halted the inquiries. The accusing documents, with the exception of a few notes by the Chief of Police, La Reynie, were burnt with his own hand.

But enough was known to the public to amaze and appall it. On this occasion, Bourdaloue, almost alone in his apostolic audacity, pronounced one of his most terrifying sermons. March 1, 1682, in the royal chapel of St. Germain, in presence of the King and the entire court, he preached a sermon as bold as any ever spoken by St. John Chysostom before Eudoxia, the historic sermon on "Impurity." No names were mentioned. It was not necessary. But the court trembled under the lash, when Bourdaloue showed in the crimes which the "Poison Court" had brought to light, the consequences of the worldliness, the heartlessness, the luxury and the nameless vices which degraded Versailles and all who breathed its tainted atmosphere. Never did the orator wield such a thunderbolt. It must have

terrified the King himself. Was he directly concerned in the " Poison Scandals "? It has never been proved, nor does it appear likely. But he was too conscious of abetting other pagan vices and crimes, not to feel some sting of remorse at the black disclosures. That year saw the beginning of his real conversion.

The Jesuit had not won Louis in his first encounter with him. The preacher was long foiled by the rebellious passions of his royal hearer. But once converted, Louis held fast, in spite of many a temptation, against his old self. Even after his conversion, the monarch blundered through love of flattery, ambition, pride, a cold selfishness and a narrow policy. But his private life and conduct were no longer tainted by the scandals which in earlier years had wrought such havoc. His last days were not without dignity.

Towards the end of August, 1715, Louis was visibly failing. On August 25, he settled in a codicil certain details with regard to the succession. With evident fervor and faith he received the Last Sacraments. But his extraordinary vitality did not leave him. He lived six days longer, praying aloud with great simplicity, speaking with his confessor, regulating the affairs of State, of his conscience, and of his family, king to the last. Of the courtiers gathered around he begged pardon

for the bad example he had set them. With the courtesy that never failed him, he thanked them for their fidelity and loyalty. To their care he recommended the child that was to succeed him. He begged them to work for harmony and union. "Farewell, gentlemen," he added, "I trust that you will sometimes remember me." He faced death, as he had faced disaster some months before, without fear.

Yet he was not unapprehensive of the future of the child who would soon be Louis XV. He asked Madame de Ventadour, the child's governess, to bring the boy to him. The little Louis was led to the Great King, and lifted up on the bed, where holding him in his arms, the dying monarch made him a fatherly and tender speech:

> My dear child, you are going to be the greatest king on earth. Never forget what you owe to God. Do not imitate me by making war, try to keep peace with your neighbors, to comfort your people as far as possible. . . . Always follow good advice and remember that you owe all to God. . . .

On August 30 he lost consciousness. Madame de Maintenon left Louis before he died and went to St. Cyr. It was her duty to have stayed

to the end. She should have remained to recite the prayers for his departing soul. Her hands should have closed his eyes in death. Those eyes at one moment seemed to be looking for someone. Louis was looking for the one woman, perhaps, whom he had truly loved, and to whom he owed the salvation of his soul. He looked for her in vain. How applicable to the dying monarch, the words of the Roman historian: "*Paucioribus. . . . lacrimis comploratus es, et in novissima luce desideravere aliquid oculi tui!*" Louis rallied somewhat the next day. But it was evident that the end was near. The assistants began to recite the prayers for the agonizing. Louis heard them and now fully conscious answered them in a voice that rose above every murmur, the sobs and tears of the kneeling throng. As the prayers were ending, Louis recognized the Cardinal de Rohan, and said quite simply: "These then are the last blessings and favors of the Church." He repeated several times the words of the *Ave*, "*Nunc et in hora mortis nostrae*," "Now and at the hour of our death," and then said: "My God, come to my help, haste Thou to help me." These were his last words. On Sunday, September 1, 1715, at eight o'clock in the morning, the royal palace reechoed the words: "The King is dead!" Louis was seventy-seven years of age. His reign

had lasted seventy-two years, one of the longest in history.

As the body of the dead monarch was borne to the tomb, it was greeted with the jeers of the crowd. It was not only the corpse of Louis which met such treatment. The monarchy itself was flouted. It had lost its hold on the people. In the person of Louis, it had lived for itself a life of selfish indulgence, dead to the higher interests of the nation and swayed by dynastic ambitions. The muttered curses of that autumn day were the first rumblings of the storm which, not a century after, was to sweep Louis' descendants from the throne. The seeds of the upas tree of the Revolution had been laid in the gardens and parks of Marly and Versailles.

It is impossible to deny the outward magnificence of the reign of Louis XIV. It would be equally unfair to ignore the qualities which Louis possessed both as a sovereign and a man. No historian may close his eyes to the literary, artistic, scientific, and military glories of the epoch. A Catholic finds many things to admire in the faith of the French people of every class and condition, in the Saints which France gave to the Church, in her missionaries, and even in the examples of genuine repentance presented to the world by those who had, like Louis himself, so deeply scan-

dalized it by their sins. In his recent volume, "*La Renaissance Catholique en France au XVII*me *Siècle,*" M. L'Abbé Prunel has clearly shown that in spite of the foul miasmas that swept over the country from the enchanted gardens of Armida in which so many were lured to death, France might have been strengthened for a long and victorious battle with immorality and unbelief, had good example been imparted to it by its natural leaders, the King and his chosen followers. It was too long denied. The body politic already was infected with the deadly germs. It might resist for a few years. But it was doomed.

The splendors of the Age of Louis XIV remind the observer of a Greek portico, thronged with princes and courtiers, artists, poets, captains, statesmen, ladies stately and fair. There is high speech, music and song. But the portico masks far less alluring scenes. Behind it are the hovel of the peasant, the deserted field, the ruin and destruction of war. Between the first scene and the second there is a world of difference. No bond of union brings them together. In the days of Louis, the second knew of the first only because its actors were supposed to obey its whims. A system thus ordered could not survive.

The ceaseless wars of Louis, his unjust attacks, like that upon Holland, the devastation, unneces-

sary and savage, which he allowed Turenne and then Mélac to carry out in the Palatinate, his insatiable pride and ambition, bred resentments and hatreds in Europe, which garnered a bloody aftermath. He never said in so many words: " I am the State." But he acted out the formula. In him were centered all the powers of the nation. Few men can resist the intoxication which such practical omnipotence confers. Parliament in our modern American and English meaning did not exist in France. Louis therefore cannot be said to have crushed its liberties. But he would not trust the people to the privilege of a voice in their own affairs. The old States General, where with a freedom which astonishes the modern reader, the sturdy Frenchmen of former times, clergy, nobility and people manfully exposed their grievances, were not convoked. Popular liberties, municipal and " mayoral franchises " were calmly set aside and the will of one man became the law of all.

Of the Turkish licentiousness of the King's private life, enough has been said. It seemed to set the seal of majesty on vice. When we remember how deep-seated it was, we realize the power of Bourdaloue's words and the inexhaustible reserve forces in the Catholic Church and the Catholic Sacramental system, which could lift the monarch

from the pit into which he had fallen and crown his last days with the dignity at least of a sincere repentance.

If in these last days the passions of youth no longer exercised their empire over the King, there were other pitfalls before him. He stumbled into one, through that spirit of exaggerated nationalism, which under the name of Gallicanism brought him into conflict with the doctrines of the Catholic Church as well as its visible head. Louis never fell into open heresy or schism. At heart, in spite of his moral weaknesses, he believed in the doctrines of the Catholic Church and never wished to be separated from her communion. But, the humiliation, prompted by political motives, which he inflicted upon Pope Alexander VII for the comparatively trivial insults offered by the Pope's Corsican guard to the suite of Créqui, the French Ambassador at Rome; the unseemly insistence on the right of asylum claimed by the French embassy in the Eternal City; the quarrel of the *Régale* with Innocent XI, and especially the unseemly and dangerous stand in support of the Gallican liberties and articles of 1682, which if not withdrawn, would have " Byzantinized " the Church of France and made it a department of the French Government, are not accomplishments we like to associate with the memory of a Christian king.

The King's last moments were undoubtedly filled with dark forebodings. They were not unfounded. The shameless cynic Philippe d'Orléans was to be Regent for the boy, Louis XV. Voltaire was growing to manhood. Jean-Jacques Rousseau had just been born. Immorality, skepticism, philosophism were about to seize the reins of power when they fell from Louis' palsied hands.

Chapter XVIII

"THE SOUND OF A VOICE THAT IS STILL"

WE remember the comparison used by Edmund Burke, on an historic occasion, when speaking of the eclipse of Chatham and the rise of Charles Townshend. ". . . Even before this splendid orb was entirely set, and while the western sun was in a blaze with his descending glory, on the opposite quarter of the heavens arose another luminary, and for his hour, became lord of the ascendant." As comparisons go, these words may not be altogether inapplicable to our orator. When the old athlete was slowly retiring from the arena, a younger champion had entered the lists. Jean Baptiste Massillon had preached at court for the first time in 1699, and brought other accents into the pulpit. Bourdaloue heard him, and generously recognized and hailed a master, exclaiming: "*Oportet illum crescere, me autem minui.*" It is for him to grow, and for me to wane.

The new preacher had chosen for his text the words of the Beatitudes: "Blessed are they that

mourn." His first words marked an epoch in French eloquence. Bourdaloue was too great not to be deeply moved by their majestic harmonies. Massillon said:

> Sire: If the world were speaking here instead of Jesus Christ, no doubt it would not use such language as this to your Majesty. Blessed the Prince, it would say to you, who has never fought but to conquer; who has seen so many powers in arms against him, only to gain glory in granting them peace; who has always been equally greater than danger and greater than victory! Blessed the Prince, who throughout the course of a long and flourishing reign has peacefully enjoyed the fruits of his glory, the love of his subject peoples, the esteem of his enemies, the admiration of all the world, the fruit of his conquests, the magnificence of his works, the wisdom of his laws, the august hope of a numerous posterity; and who has nothing more to desire than long to preserve that which he possesses!
>
> Thus the world would speak. But, Sire, Jesus Christ does not speak as the world does. Blessed, Christ says to you, not he

who is winning the admiration of his age, but he who is making the world to come his principal concern, and who lives in contempt of himself, and of all that is passing away; because his is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed, not he whose reign and whose acts history will immortalize in the memory of men, but he whose tears shall have blotted out the story of his sins from the remembrance of God Himself; because he will be eternally comforted.

Blessed, not he who shall have extended by new conquests the limits of his empire, but he who shall have confined his inclinations and passions within the limits marked out by the law of God; because he will possess an estate more lasting than the empire of the whole world. Blessed, not he who, raised by the acclamations of subject peoples above all the princes who have preceded him, peacefully enjoys his grandeur and his glory, but he who, not finding on the throne itself anything worthy of his heart, seeks for perfect happiness here below only in virtue and righteousness; because he will be satisfied.

Blessed, not he to whom men shall have given the glorious titles of " Great " and

> "Invincible" but he to whom the unfortunate shall have given, before Jesus, the title of "Father" and of "Merciful"; because he will find mercy. Blessed, in fine, not he who, being always arbiter of the destiny of his enemies, has more than once given peace to the earth, but he who has been able to give it to himself, and to banish from his heart the vices and inordinate affections which trouble its tranquillity and peace; because he will be called a child of God. These, Sire, are they whom Christ calls blessed, and the Gospel knows of no other blessedness on earth than virtue and innocence.

That noble exordium strikes a note as distinctive in its own way as the opening chords of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. It is as original and as soul-stirring. The veteran who was retiring from the pulpit might willingly now lay down his arms. His prophet's mantle had fallen on no unworthy shoulders.

Massillon grew year by year, and his star soon caught the eye of the new generation. The age of Louis XIV had come to its close, dark and threatening. Another literature, other tastes, other standards were to rule. But the older

generation, which had lived with the giants of the seventeenth century, could not easily forget the sturdier accents of that voice now forever hushed. And as Bourdaloue lay on his death-bed, he could calmly and without regret, review those thirty-four long years during which he had fulfilled the office of ambassador of Christ before people, prince and king. Not once had he held the truth captive, nor betrayed his trust. The Herald of Christ had fearlessly spoken his message. The soldier of Ignatius had earned his rest, his warfare was done! The Master, to whom he consecrated his talents and his life, must have welcomed him with the words: "Louis, thou hast spoken well of Me." Louis Bourdaloue asked no other reward.

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